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TRAITS AND STORIES

OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE MIDNIGHT MASS.

Frank M'Kenna was a snug farmer, frugal and industrious in his habits, and, what is rare amongst most men of his class, addicted to neither drinking nor quarrelling. He lived at the skirt of a mountain, which ran up in long successive undulations, until it ended in a dark, abrupt peak, very perpendicular on one side, and always, except on a bright day, capped with clouds. Before his door lay a hard plain, covered only with a kind of bent, and studded with round grey rocks, protruding somewhat above its surface. Through this plain, over a craggy channel, ran a mountain torrent, that issued to the right of M'Kenna's house, from a rocky and precipitous valley which twisted itself round the base of the mountain until it reached the perpendicular side, where the peak actually overhung it. On looking either from the bottom of the valley or the top of the peak, the depth appeared immense; and, on a summer's day, when the black-thorns and other hardy shrubs that in some places clothed its rocky sides were green, to view the river sparkling below you in the sun, as it flung itself over two or three cataracts of great depth and boldness, filled the mind with those undefinable sensations of pleasure inseparable from a contemplation of the sublimities of nature. Nor did it possess less interest when beheld in the winter storm. Well do we remember, though then ignorant of our own motives, when we have, in the turmoil of the elements, climbed its steep, shaggy sides, disappearing like a speck, or something not of

earth, among the dark clouds that rolled over its summit, for no other purpose than to stand upon its brow, and look down on the red torrent, dashing with impetuosity from crag to crag, whilst the winds roared, and the clouds flew in dark columns around us, giving to the natural wildness of the place an air of wilder desolation. Beyond this glen the mountains stretched away for eight or ten miles in swelling masses, between which lay many extensive sweeps, well sheltered and abundantly stocked with game, particularly with hares and grouse. M'Kenna's house stood, as I said, at the foot of this mountain, just where the yellow surface of the plain began to darken into the deeper hues of the heath; to the left lay a considerable tract of stony land in a state of cultivation; and beyond the river, exactly opposite the house, rose a long line of hills, studded with houses, and in summer diversified with fallow, pasture, and corn-fields, the beauty of which was heightened by the columns of smoke that slanted across the hills, as the breeze carried them through the lucid haze of the atmosphere.

M'Kenna's family consisted of himself, his wife, two daughters, and two sons. One of these was a young man addicted to drink, idle, ill-tempered, and disobedient; seldom taking a part in the labours of the family, but altogether devoted to field sports, fairs, markets, and dances. In many parts of Ireland it is usual to play at cards for mutton, loaves, fowls, or whisky, and he was seldom absent from such gambling parties, if held within a reasonable distance. Often had the other members of the family remonstrated with him on his idle and immoral courses; but their remonstrances only excited his bad passions, and produced on his part angry and exasperating language, or open determinations to abandon the family altogether and enlist. For some years he went on in this way, a hardened, ungodly profligate, spurning the voice of reproof and of conscience, and insensible to the entreaties of domestic affection, or the commands

of parental authority. Such was his state of mind and mode of life when our story opens.

At the time in which the incidents contained in this sketch took place, the peasantry of Ireland, being less encumbered with heavy rents, and more buoyant in spirits than the decay of national prosperity has of late permitted them to be, indulged more frequently, and to a greater stretch, in those rural sports and festivities so suitable to their natural love of humour and amusement. Dances, wakes, and weddings, were then held according to the most extravagant forms of ancient usage; the people were easier in their circumstances, and consequently indulged in them with lighter hearts, and a stronger relish for enjoyment. When any of the great festivals of their religion approached, the popular mind, unrepressed by poverty and national dissension, gradually elevated itself to a species of wild and reckless mirth, productive of incidents irresistably ludicrous, and remarkably characteristic of Irish manners. It is not, however, to be expected, that a people whose love of fighting is so innate a principle in their disposition, should celebrate these festive seasons without an occasional crime, which threw its deep shadow over the mirthful character of their customs. Many such occurred; but they were looked upon *then* with a degree of horror and detestation of which we can form but a very inadequate idea at present.

It was upon the advent of one of those festivals—Christmas—that the family of M'Kenna, like every other family in the neighbourhood, were making preparations to celebrate it with the usual hilarity. They cleared out their barn in order to have a dance on Christmas Eve, and, for this purpose, the two sons and the servant man wrought with that kind of industry produced by the cheerful prospect of some happy event. For a week or fortnight before the evening on which the dance was appointed to be held, due notice of it had been given to the neighbours, and,

of course, there was no doubt but that it would be numerously attended.

Christmas Eve, as the whole day preceding Christmas is called, has been always a day of great preparation and bustle. Indeed the whole week previous to it is also remarkable, as exhibiting the importance attached by the people to those occasions on which they can give a loose to their love of fun and frolic. The farm-house undergoes a thorough cleansing. Father and sons are, or rather used to be, all engaged in repairing the out-houses, patching them with thatch where it was wanted, mending mangers, paving stable floors, fixing cow-stakes, making *boraghs*,* removing nuisances, and cleansing streets.

On the other hand, the mother, daughters, and maids, were also engaged in their several departments; the latter scouring the furniture with sand; the mother making culinary preparations, baking bread, killing fowls, or salting meat; whilst the daughters were unusually intent upon the decoration of their own dress, and the making up of the family linen. All, however, was performed with an air of gaiety and pleasure; the ivy and holly were disposed about the dressers and collar beams with great glee; the chimneys were swept amidst songs and laughter; many bad voices, and some good ones, were put in requisition; whilst several who had never been known to chant a stave, alarmed the listeners by the grotesque and incomprehensible nature of their melody. Those who were inclined to devotion—and there is no lack of it in Ireland—took to carols and hymns, which they sang, for want of better airs, to tunes highly comic. We have ourselves often heard the Doxology sung in Irish verse, to the facetious air of "Paudeen O'Rafferty;" and other hymns to the tune of "Peas upon a Trencher," and "Cruskeen Lawn." Sometimes, on the contrary, many of them, from the very

* The rope with which a cow is tied in the cow-house.

fulness of jollity, would become pathetic, and indulge in those touching old airs of their country, which may be truly called songs of sorrow, from the exquisite and simple pathos with which they abound. This, though it may seem anomalous, is but natural; for there is nothing so apt to recall to the heart those friends, whether absent or dead, with whom it has been connected, as a stated festival. Affection is then awakened, and calls to the hearth where it presides those on whose faces it loves to look; if they be living, it places them in the circle of happiness which surrounds it; and if they be removed for ever from such scenes, their memory, which, amidst the din of ordinary life, has almost passed away, is now restored, and their loss felt as if it had been only just then sustained.

For this reason, at such times, it is not at all unusual to see the elders of Irish families touched by pathos as well as humour. The Irish are a people whose affections are as strong as their imaginations are vivid; and, in illustration of this, we may add, that many a time have we seen them raised to mirth and melted into tears almost at the same time, by a song of the most comic character. The mirth, however, was for the song, and the sorrow for the memory of some beloved relation who had been remarkable for singing it, or with whom it had been a favourite.

We do not affirm that in the family of the M'Kennas there were, upon the occasion which we are describing, any tears shed. The enjoyments of the season, and the humours of the expected dance, both combined to give them a more than usual degree of mirth and frolic. At an early hour all that was necessary for the due celebration of that night and the succeeding day, had been arranged and completed. The whisky had been laid in, the Christmas candles bought, the barn cleared out, the seats laid; in short, everything in its place, and a place for everything. About one o'clock, however, the young members of the family began to betray some symptoms of uneasiness;

nor was M'Kenna himself, though the *farithee*, or man of the house, altogether so exempt from what they felt, as might, if the cause of it were known to our readers, be expected from a man of his years and experience.

From time to time one of the girls tripped out as far as the stile before the door, where she stood looking in a particular direction, until her sight was strained.

"Och, och," her mother exclaimed during her absence, "but that colleen's sick about Barney!—musha, but it would be the beautiful joke, all out, if he'd disappoint the whole of yees. Faix, it wouldn't be unlike the same man, to go to wherever he can make most money; and sure small blame to him for that; what's one place to him more than another?"

"Hut," M'Kenna replied, rising, however, to go out himself, "the girsha's makin' a *bauliore** of herself."

"An' where's yourself slippin' out to?" rejoined his wife, with a wink of shrewd humour at the rest, "I say, Frank, are *you* goin' to look for him too? Mavrone, but that's sinsible! Why, thin, you snakin' ould rogue, is that the way wid you? Throth, I have often hard it said, that 'one fool makes many;' but sure enough, 'an ould fool's worse nor any.' Come in here this minute, I say—walk back—you to have your horn up!—Faix, indeed!"

"Why, I am only goin' to get the small phaties boiled for the pigs, poor crathurs, for their Christmas dinner. Sure we oughtn't to neglect thim no more nor ourselves, the crathurs, that can't spake their wants, except by gruntin'."

"Saints above!—the Lord forgive me for bringin' down their names upon a Christmas-eve!—but its beside himself the man is!—an' him knows that the pha-

* A laughing-stock.

ties wor boiled an' made up in balls for them arly this mornin'!"

In the mean time, the wife's good-natured attack upon her husband produced considerable mirth in the family. In consequence of what she said, he hesitated; but ultimately was proceeding towards the door, when the daughter returned, her brow flushed, and her eye lit up with mirth and delight.

"Ha!" said the father, with a complaisant smile, "all's right, Peggy; you seen him, a lanna. The music's in your eye, a cushla; an' the feet of you can't keep themselves off o' the ground; an' all bekase you seen Barny *Dahl* pokin' acrass the fields, wid his head up, an' his skirt stickin' out behind him wid Granua Waile."*

The father had conjectured properly, for the joy which animated the girl's countenance could not be misunderstood.

"Barny's comin'," she exclaimed, clapping her hands with great glee, "an' our Frank wid him; they're at the river, and Frank has him on his back, and Granua Waile undher his arm! Come out, come out! You'll die for good, lookin' at them staggerin' acrass. I knew he'd come! I knew it! God be good to thim that invinted Christmas; it's a brave time, faix!"

In a moment the inmates were grouped before the door, all anxious to catch a glimpse of Barny and Granua Waile.

"Faix, ay! Sure enough. Sarra doubt of it! Whethen, I'd never mistrust Barney!" might be heard in distinct exclamations from each.

"Faith, he's a Trojan," said the *farithee*, "an' must get lashins of the best we have. Come in, childher, an' red the hob for him.

Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year,

* His fiddle.

An' the divil a mouth
Shall be friends wid drouth,
While I have whisky, ale, or beer.

Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year;
Wid han' in han',
An' can to can,
Then Hi for the whisky, ale, an' beer.

Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year;
Then the high an' the low
Shall shake their toe,
When prim'd wid whisky, ale, an' beer.

For all that, the sorra fig I care for either ale or beer, barrin' in regard of mere drouth; give me the whisky. Eh, Alley—won't we have a jorum any how?"

"Why, thin," replied the wife, "the divil be from me (the crass about us for namin' him) but you're a greater *Brinoge* than some of your childher! I suppose it's *your* capers Frank has in him. Will you behave yourself, you ould slingpoke? Behave, I say, an' let me go. Childher, will you help me to flake this man out o' the place? Look at him, here, caperin' an' crackin' his fingers afore me, an' pullin' me out to dance!"

"Och, och, murdher alive," exclaimed the good man, out of breath, "I seen the day, any way! An', maybe, could show a step or two yet, if I was well vexed. You can't forget ould times, Alley? Eh, you thief?"

"Musha, have sinse, man alive," replied the wife, in a tone of placid gravity, which only betrayed the pleasure she herself felt in his happiness. "Have sinse, an' the strange man comin' in, an' don't let him *see* you in sich figaries."

The observation of the good woman produced a loud laugh among them. "Arrah what are yees laughin' at?" she inquired.

"Why, mother," said one of her daughters, "how could Barny *Dhal*, a blind man, *see* any body?"

Alley herself laughed at her blunder, but wittily replied, "faith, avourneen, maybe he can often see as nately through his ear, as you can do wid your eyes open; sure they say he can hear the grass growin'."

"For that matther," observed the *farithee*, joining in the joke, "he can see as far as any of us—while we're asleep."

The conversation was then proceeding, when Barny *Dhal* and young Frank M'Kenna entered the kitchen.

In a moment all hands were extended to welcome Barny: *Millia failte ghud*, Barny!" "*Ccad millia failte ghud*, Barny!" "Oh, Barney did you come at last?" "You're welcome, Barny!" "Barny, my Trojan, how is every cart-load of you?" "How is Granua Waile, Barny?"

"Why thin, holy music, did you never see Barny *Dhal* afore? Clear off from about me, or, by the sweets of rosin, I'll play the divil an' brake things. 'You're welcome, Barny!'—an' 'How are you, Barny?' Why thin, piper o' Moses, don't I know I'm welcome, an' yit you must be tellin' me what every body knows! But sure I have great news for you all!"

"What is that, Barny?"

"Well, but can yees keep a sacret? Can yees, girls?"

"Faix can we, Barny, achora."

"Well, so can I—ha, ha, ha! Now are yees sarved? Come, let me to the hob."

"Here, Barny; I'll lead you, Barny."

"No, I *have* him; come, Barny, I'll lead you; here, achora, this is the spot—that's it. Why, Barny," said the arch girl, as she placed him in the corner, "sorra one o' the hob but knows you: it never stirs—ha, ha, ha!"

"Throth, a colleen, that tongue o' yours will delude some one afore long, if it has'nt done so already."

"But how is Granua Waile, Barny?"

"Poor Granua is it? Faith, times is hard wid her often. 'Granua,' says I to her, 'what do you say, acushla? we're axed to go to two or three places to-day—what do you say? Do you lead, an' I'll follow: your will is my pleasure.' 'An' where are we axed to?' says Granua, sinsible enough. 'Why,' says I, 'to Paddy Lanigan's, to Mike Hartigan's, to Jack Lynch's, an', at the heel o' the hunt, to Frank M'Kenna's of the Mountain Bar.' 'By my song,' says she, '*you* may go where you plase; for me, I'm off to Frank M'Kenna's, one of the dacentest men in Europe, an' his wife the same. Divil a toe I'll set a waggin' in any other place this night,' says she, for 'tis there we're both well thrated wid the best the house can afford. So,' says she, 'in the name of all that's musical, you're welcome to the poker an' tongs any where else: for me, I'm off to Frank's.' An' faith, sure enough, she took to her pumps; an' it was only comin' over the hill there, that young Frank an' I overtuck her: divil a lie in it."

In fact, Barny, besides being a fiddler, was a *shanahus* of the first water; could tell a story, or trace a genealogy as well as any man living, and draw the long bow in either capacity much better than he could in the practice of his more legitimate profession.

"Well, here she is, Barny, to the fore," said the aforesaid arch girl, "an' now give us a tune."

"What!" replied the *farithee*, "is it widout either aitin' or drinkin'? Why the girsha's beside herself! Alley, aroon, get him the linen,' an' a sup to tighten his elbow."

The good woman instantly went to provide refreshments for the musician.

"Come, girls," said Barny, "will yees get me a scythe or a handsaw?"

"A scythe or a handsaw! Ethen what to do, Barny?"

"Why, to pare my nails, to be sure," replied Barny, with a loud laugh; "but stay—come back here—I'll make shift to do with a pair of scissors this bout.

"The paarent finds his sons,
The tuthorer whips them;
The nailer makes his nails,
The fiddler clips them!"

Wherever Barny came there was mirth, and a disposition to be pleased, so that his jokes always told.

"Musha, the sorra *pare* you, Barny," said one of the girls, "but there's no bein' up to you, good or bad."

"The sorra *pair* me, is it? faix, Nancy, you'll soon be paired yourself wid some one, avourneen. Do you know a sartin young man wid a nose on him runnin' to a point like the pin of a sun-dial, his knees brakin' the king's pace, strikin' one another ever since he was able to walk, an' that was about four years afther he could say his *Pather Nosther;* an' faith, whatever you may think, there's no makin' them paceable except by puttin' between them! The wrong side of his shin, too, is foremost; an' though the one half of his two feet is all heels, he keeps the same heels for set days an' bonfire nights, an' savinly walks on his ancles. His leg, too, Nancy, is stuck in the middle of his foot, like a poker in a pickaxe; an', along wid all, ——"

"Here, Barny, thry your hand at this," said the good woman, who had not heard his ludicrous description of her fictitious son-in-law—"*eeh arran agus bee laudher*, Barny, ate bread an' be strong. I'll warrant when you begin to play, they'll give you little time to do anything but scrape away;—taste the dhrink first, any way, in the name o' God,"—and she filled him a glass.

"Augh, augh! faith you're the moral of a woman. Are you there, M'Kenna?—here's a sudden disholu-

tion to your family! May they be scatthered wid all speed—manin' the girls—to all corners o' the parish! ha, ha, ha! Well, *that* won't vex them, any how; an' next, here's a merry Christmas to us, an' many o' them! Whooh! blur-an'-age!—whooh! oh, by gorra!—that's—that's—Frank, run afther my breath—I've lost—run, you tory: oh, by gor, that's stuff as sthrong as Sampson, so it is. Arrah, what well do you dhraw that from? for, faith, 'twould be mighty convanient to live near it in a hard frost."

Barny was now silent for some time, which silence was produced by the industry he displayed in assailing the substantial refreshments before him. When he had concluded his repast he once more tasted the liquor, after which he got Granua Waile, and continued playing their favourite tunes, and amusing them with anecdotes, both true and false, until the hour drew nigh when his services were expected by the young men and maidens who had assembled to dance in the barn. Occasionally, however, they took a preliminary step, in which they were joined by a few of their neighbours. Old Frank himself felt his spirits elevated by contemplating the happiness of his children and their young associates.

"Frank," said he, to the youngest of his sons, "go down to Owen Reillaghan's, and tell him an' his family to come up to the dance early in the evenin'. Owen's a pleasant man," he added, "and a good neighbour, but a small thought too strict in his duties. Tell him to come up, Frank, arly I say; he'll have time enough to go to the Midnight Mass afther dancin' the 'Rakes of Ballyshanny,' and 'the Baltihorum jig;' an' maybe he can't do both in style."

"Ay," said Frank, in his jeering manner, "he carries a handy heel at the dancin', and a soople tongue at the prayin'; but let him alone for bringin' the bottom of his glass and his eyebrow acquainted. But if he'd pray less—"

"Go along, *a veehonee*,* an' bring him up," replied the father: "you to talk about prayin'! Them that 'ud catch you at a prayer ought to be showed for the world to wondher at: a man wid two heads an him would be a fool to him. Go along, I say, and do what you're bid."

"I'm goin'," said Frank, "I'm off: but what if he doesn't come? I'll then have my journey for nothin'."

"An' it's good payment for any journey ever you'll make, barrin' it's to the gallows," replied the father, nearly provoked at his reluctance in obeying him: "won't *you* have dancin' enough in the coorse o' the night, for *you'll* not go to the Midnight Mass, and why don't you be off wid you at wanst?"

Frank shrugged his shoulders two or three times, being loth to leave the music and dancing; but on seeing his father about to address him in sharper language, he went out with a frown on his brows, and a half-smothered imprecation bursting from his lips.

He had not proceeded more than a few yards from the door, when he met Rody Teague, his father's servant, on his way to the kitchen. "Rody," said he, "isn't this a purty business? My father wantin' to send *me* down to Owen Reillaghan's; when, by the vartue o' my oath, I'd as soon go half way into hell, as to any place where his son, Mike Reillaghan, 'ud be. How will I manage, Rody?"

"Why," replied Rody, "as to meetin' wid Mike, take my advice and avoid him. And what is more, I'd give up Peggy Gartland for good. Isn't it a mane thing for you, Frank, to be hangin' after a girl that's fonder of another than she is of yourself. By this and by that, I'd no more do it—awouh! catch me at it—I'd have spunk in me."

Frank's brow darkened as Rody spoke; instead of instantly replying, he was silent, and appeared to be

* You profligate.

debating some point in his own mind, on which he had not come to a determination.

"My father did'nt hear of the fight between Mike and me?" said he interrogatively—"do you think he did, Rody?"

"Not to my knowledge," replied the servant; "if he did, he would'nt surely send *you* down; but, talking of the fight, you are known to be a stout, well-fought boy—no doubt of that—still, I say, you had no right to provoke Mike as you did, who, it's well known, could bate any two men in the parish; and so sign, you got yourself dacently trounced, about a girl that doesn't love a bone in your skin."

"He disgraced me, Rody," observed Frank—"I can't rise my head; and you know I was thought by all the parish, as good a man as him. No, I wouldn't, this blessed Chrstmas Eve above us, for all that ever my name was worth, be disgraced by him as I am. But—hould, man—have patience!"

"Throth and, Frank, that's what *you* never had," said Rody; "and as to bein' disgraced, you disgraced yourself. What right had you to challenge the boy to fight, and to strike him into the bargain, bekase Peggy Gartland danced wid *him*, and wouldn't go out wid *you?* Death alive, sure that wasn't *his* fault."

Every word of reproof which proceeded from Rody's lips but strengthened Frank's rage, and added to his sense of shame; he looked first in the direction of Reillaghan's house, and immediately towards the little village in which Peggy Gartland lived.

"Rody," said he, slapping him fiercely on the shoulder, "go in—I've—I've made up my mind upon what I'll do; go in, Rody, and get your dinner; but don't be out of the way when I come back."

"And what have you made up your mind to?" inquired Rody.

"Why, be the sacred Mother o' Heaven, Rody, to—to—be friends wid Mike."

"Ay, there's sinse and rason in that," replied Rody: "and if you'd take my advice, you'd give up Peggy Gartland too."

"I'll see you when I come back, Rody; don't be from about the place."

And as he spoke, a single spring brought him over the stile at which they held the foregoing conversation.

On advancing, he found himself in one of his father's fields, under the shelter of an elder-hedge. Here he paused, and seemed still somewhat uncertain as to the direction in which he should proceed. At length he decided; the way towards Peggy Gartland's was that which he took, and as he walked rapidly, he soon found himself at the village in which she lived.

It was now a little after twilight; the night was clear, the moon being in her first quarter, and the clouds through which she appeared to struggle, were light and fleecy, but rather cold looking; such, in short, as would seem to promise a sudden fall of snow. Frank had passed the two first cabins of the village, and was in the act of parrying the attacks of some yelping cur that assailed him, when he received a slap on the back, accompanied by a *gho manhi Dhea ghud, a Franchas, co wul thu guilh a nish, a rogora dhu?** "Who's this?" exclaimed Frank: "eh! why Darby More, you suilin' thief o' the world, is this you?"

"Ay, indeed; an' you're goin' down to Peggy's?" said the other, pointing significantly towards Peggy Gartland's house. "Well, man, what's the harm? She may get worse, that is, hopin' still that you'll mend your manners, a bouchal: but isn't your nose out o' joint there, Frank, darlin'?"

"No sich thing at all, Darby," replied Frank, gulping down his indignation, which rose afresh on hear-

* God save you, Frank! Where are you going now, you black rogue?

ing that the terms on which he stood with Peggy were so notorious.

"Throth but it is," said Darby; "an' to tell the blessed thruth, I'm not sarry that it's out o' joint; for when I tould you to lave the case in *my* hands, along wid a small trifle that didn't signify much to you—whoo! not at all; you'd rather play it at cards, or dhrink it, or spind it wid no good. Out o' joint! musha, if ever a man's nose was to be pitied and yours is: why, didn't Mike Reillaghan put it out o' joint, twiist? first in regard to Peggy, and secondly by the batin' he gave you an it."

"It's well known, Darby," replied Frank, "that 'twas by a chance blow he did it; and, you know, a chance blow might kill the divil."

"But there was no danger of Mike's gettin' the chance blow," observed the sarcastic vagrant, for such he was.

"Maybe it's afore him," replied his companion: "we'll have another thrial for it, any how; but where are you goin', Darby? Is it to the dance?"

"Me! Is it a man wid five holy ordhers an him? No, no! I might go up, maybe, as far as your father's, merely to see the family, only for the night that's in it; but I'm goin' to another frind's place to spind my Chris'mas, an', over an' above, I must go to the Midnight Mass. Frank, change your coorses, an' mend your life, an' don't be the talk o' the parish. Remimber me to the family, an' say I'll see them soon."

"How long will you stop in the neighbourhood?" inquired Frank.

"Arrah why, acushla?" replied the mendicant, softening his language.

"I might be wantin' to see you some o' these days," said Frank: "indeed, it's not unlikely, Darby; so don't go, any how, widout seein' me."

"Ah!" said Darby, "had you taken a fool's advice—but it can't be helped—the harm's done, I doubt; how-an'-ever, for the matther o' that, maybe I have

as good as Peggy in my eye for you; by the same token, as the night's could, warm your tooth, avick; there's waker wather nor this in Lough Corr. Sorra sup of it ever I keep for my own use at all, barrin' when I take a touch o' configuration in my bowels, or, maybe, when I'm too long at my prayers; for, God help me, sure I'm but sthrivin' to work out my salvation as well as I can! Your health, any how, an' a merry Chris'mas to you!—not forgettin' myself," he added, putting to his lips a large cow's horn, which he kept slung beneath his arm, like the bugle of a coach-guard, only that this was generally concealed by an outside coat, no two inches of which were of the same materials or colour. Having taken a tolerably large draught from this, which, by the way, held near two quarts, he handed it with a smack and a shrug to Frank, who immediately gave it a wipe with the skirt of his coat, and pledged his companion.

"I'll be wantin'," observed Frank, "to see you in the hollydays—faith, that stuff's to be christened yet, Darby—so don't go till we have a dish o' discoorse about somethin' I'll mintion to you. As for Peggy Gartland, I'm done wid her; she may marry ould Nick for me."

"Or you for ould Nick," said the cynic, "which would be nearly the same thing: but go an, avick, an' never heed me; sure I must have my spake—doesn't every body know Darby More?"

"I've nothin' else to say *now*," added Frank, "and you have my authority to spread it as far as you plase. I'm done wid her: so good night, an' good cuttin'* to your horn, Darby! You damn ould villain?" he subjoined in a low voice, when Darby had got out of his hearing; "surely it's not in yourself, but in the blessed words and things you have about you, that there is any good."

"Musha, good night, Frank, alanna," replied the

* Good cuttin'—May what's in it never fail.

other; "an' the divil sweep you, for a skamin' vagabone, that's a curse to the country, and has kep me out o' more weddins than any one I ever met wid, by your roguery in puttin' evil between frinds an' neighbours, jist when they'd be ready for the priest to say the words over them! Good won't come of you, you profligate."

"The last words were scarcely uttered by the sturdy mendicant, when he turned round to observe whether or not Frank would stop at Larry Gartland's, the father of the girl to whom he had hitherto unsuccessfully avowed his attachment.

"I'd depind on him," said he, in a soliloquy, "as soon as I'd depind on ice of an hour's growth: an,' whether or not, sure as I'm on my way to Owen Reillaghan's, the father of the dacent boy that he's strivin' to outdo, mayn't I as well watch his motions, any way?"

He accordingly proceeded along the shadowy side of the street, in order to avoid Frank's eye, should he chance to look back, and quietly dodged on until he fairly saw him enter the house.

Having satisfied himself that the object of Frank's visit, to the village was in some shape connected with Peggy Gartland, the mendicant immediately retraced his steps, and at a pace more rapid than usual, strided on to Owen Reillaghan's, whither he arrived just in time to secure an excellent Christmas Eve dinner.

In Ireland, that description of mendicants which differs so strikingly from the common crowd of beggars as to constitute a distinct species, comprehends within itself as anomalous an admixture of fun and devotion, external rigour and private licentiousness, love of superstition and of good whisky, as might naturally be supposed, without any great stretch of credulity, to belong to men thrown among a people in whom so many extremes of character and morals meet. The known beggar who goes his own rounds, and has his own walk, always adapts his character to

that of his benefactor, whose whims and peculiarities of temper he studies with industry and generally with success. By this means, joined to a dexterity in tracing out the private history of families and individuals, he is enabled to humour the caprices, to manage the eccentricities, and to touch with a masterly hand the prejudices and particular opinions of his patrons; and this he contrives to do with great address and tact. Such was the character of Darby More, whose person, naturally large, was increased to an enormous size by the number of coats, blankets, and bags, with which he was encumbered. A large belt, buckled round his body, contained within its girth much more of money, meal, and whiskey than ever met the eye; his hat was exceedingly low in the crown; his legs were cased in at least three pairs of stockings; and in his hand he carried a long *cant*, spiked at the lower end, with which he slung himself over small rivers and dykes, and kept dogs at bay. He was a devotee, too, notwithstanding the whisky horn under his arm; attended wakes, christenings, and weddings; rubbed for the *rose** and king's evil (for the varlet insisted that he was a seventh son); cured tooth-aches, colics, and head-aches, by charms; but made most money by a knack which he possessed of tattooing into the naked breast the representation of Christ upon the cross. This was a secret of considerable value, for many of the superstitious people believed that by having this stained in upon them, they would escape unnatural deaths, and be almost sure of heaven.

When Darby approached Reillaghan's house, he was considering the propriety of disclosing to his son the fact of his having left his rival with Peggy Gartland. He ultimately determined that it would be proper to do so; for he was shrewd enough to suspect that the wish Frank had expressed of seeing him before he left the country, was but a *ruse* to purchase his silence

* A scrofulous swelling.

touching his appearance in the village. In this, however, he was mistaken.

"God save the house!" exclaimed Darby, on entering—"God save the house, an' all that's in it! God save it to the North!" and he formed the sign of the cross in *that* direction; "God save it to the South!† to the Aiste!† and to the Waiste!† Save it upwards!† and save it downwards!† Save it backwards!† and save it forwards!† Save it right!† and save it left!† Save it by night!† save it by day!† Save it here!† save it there!† Save it this way!† an' save it that way!† Save it atin'!††† an' save it drinkin'!††††††† Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin. An' now that I've blessed the place, in the name of the nine Patriarchs, how are yees all, man, woman, an' child? An' a merry Christmas to yees, says Darby More!"

Darby, in the usual spirit of Irish hospitality, received a sincere welcome, was placed up near the fire, a plate filled with the best food on the table laid before him, and requested to want nothing for the asking.

"Why, Darby," said Reillaghan, "we expected you long ago: why didn't you come sooner?"

"The Lord's will be done! for ev'ry man has his throubles," replied Darby, stuffing himself in the corner like an Epicure; "an' why should a sinner like me, or the likes o' me, be widout thim? 'Twas a dhrame I had last night that kep me. They say, indeed, that dhrames go by contraries, but not always, to my own knowledge."

"An' what was the dhrame about, Darby?" inquired Reillaghan's wife.

"Why, Ma'am, about some that I see on this hearth, well, an' in good health; may they long live to be so! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin!†††

"Blessed Virgin! Darby, sure it would be nothin' bad that's to happen? Would it, Darby?"

"Keep yourself asy on that head. I have widin

my own mind the power of makin' it come out for good—I know the prayer for it. Oxis Doxis!"††

"God be praised for that, Darby: sure it would be a terrible business, all out, if anything was to happen. Here's Mike that was born on Whissle Monday, of all days in the year, an', you know, they say any child born on that day is to die an unnatural death. We named Mike after St. Michael that he might purtect him."

"Make yourself asy, I say; don't I tell you I have the prayer to keep it back—hach! hach!—why, there's a bit stuck in my throath, some way! *Wurrah dheelish*, what's this! Maybe you could give me a sup o' dhrink—wather, or anything to moisten the morsel I'm atin'? *Wurrah*, Ma'am dear, make haste, it's goin' agin the breath wid me!'

"Oh, the sorra taste o' wather, Darby," said Owen; "sure this is Christmas Eve, you know; so you see, Darby, for ould acquaintance sake, an' that you may put up an odd prayer now an' thin for us, jist be thryin' this."

Darby honoured the gift by immediate acceptance.

"Well, Owen Reillighan," said he, "you make me take more o' this stuff nor any man I know; and particularly by rason that bein' given,—wid a blessin', to the ranns, an' prayers, an' holy charms—I don't think it so good; barrin', indeed, as Father Donnellan towld me, when the wind, by long fastin', gets into my stomach, as was the case to-day, I'm often throubled, God help me, wid a configuration in the—hugh! ugh! an' thin it's good for me—a little of it."

"This would make a brave powdher-horn, Darby More," observed one of Reillaghan's sons, "if it wasn't so big. What do you keep in it, Darby?"

"Why, *a villish*, nothin' indeed but a sup o' Father Donnellan's holy wather, that they say by all accounts it costs him great trouble to produce, by rason that he must fast a long time, and pray by the day, afore he gets himself holy enough to consecrate it."

"It smells like whisky, Darby," said the boy without any intention, however, of offending him: "i smells very like poteen."

"Hould your tongue, Risthard," said the elder Reillaghan; "what 'ud make the honest man have whisky in it? Didn't he tell you what's in it?"

"The gorsoon's right enough," replied Darby: "I got the horn from Barny Dalton a couple o' days agone; 'twas whisky *he* had in it, an' it smells of it sure enough, an' will, indeed, for some time longer. Och, och! the heavens be praised, I've made a good dinner! May they never know want that gave it to me! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin!"†††

"Darby, thry this agin," said Reillaghan, offering him another bumper.

"Throth an' I will, thin, for I find myself a great dale the betther of the one I tuck. Well, here's health an' happiness to us, an' may we all meet in heaven! Risthard, hand me that horn till I be goin' out to the barn, in ordher to do somethin' for my sowl. The holy wather's a good thing to have about one."

"But the dhrame, Darby?" inquired Mrs. Reillaghan. "Won't you tell it to us?"

"Let Mike follow me to the barn," he replied, "an' I'll tell him as much of it as he ought to hear. An' now let all of yees prepare for the Midnight Mass: go there wid proper intintions, an' not to be coortin' or dhrinkin' by the way. We're all sinners, any way, an' oughtn't to neglect our sowls. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis. Amin!"

He immediately strided with the horn under his arm, towards the barn, where he knelt, and began his orisons in a tone sufficiently loud to be heard in the kitchen.

When he was gone, Mrs. Reillaghan, who, with the curiosity natural to her sex, and the superstition peculiar to her station in life, felt anxious to hear Darby's dream, urged Mike to follow him forthwith,

that he might prevail on him to detail it at full length.

Darby, who knew not exactly what the dream ought to be, replied to Mike's inquiries vaguely.

"Mike," said he, "antil the proper time comes, I can't tell it; but listen: take my advice, an' slip down to Peggy Gartland's by and by. I have strong suspicions, if my dhrame is thrue, that Frank M'Kenna has a design upon her. People may be abroad this night widout bein' noticed, by rason o' the Midnight Mass; Frank has friends in Kilnaheery, up behind the mountains; an' the divil might tempt him to bring her there. Keep your eye an him, or rather an Peggy. If my dhrame's true, he was there this night."

"I thought I gave him enough on her account," said Mike. "The poor girl hasn't a day's pace in regard of him; but, plase goodness, I'll soon put an end to it, for I'll marry her durin' the Hollydays."

"Go, avick, an' let me finish my *Pudheran Partha:* I have to get through it before the Midnight Mass comes. Slip down and find out what he was doin'; and when you come back, let me know."

Mike, perfectly aware of young M'Kenna's character, immediately went towards Lisdrum, for so the village where Peggy Gartland lived was called. He felt the danger to be apprehended from the interference of his rival the more acutely, inasmuch as he was not ignorant of the feuds and quarrels which the former had frequently produced between friends and neighbours, by the subtle poison of his falsehoods, which were both wanton and malicious. He therefore advanced at an unusually brisk pace, and had nearly reached the village, when he perceived in the distance a person resembling Frank approaching him at a pace nearly as rapid as his own.

"If it is Frank M'Kenna," thought he, "he must pass me, for this is his straight line home."

It appeared, however, that he had been mistaken; for he whom he had supposed to be the object of his

enmity, crossed the field by a different path, and seemed to be utterly ignorant of the person whom he was about to meet, so far, at least, as a quick, free, unembarrassed step could intimate his acquaintance with him.

The fact, however, was, that Reillaghan, had the person whom he met approached him more nearly, would have found his first suspicions correct. Frank was then on his return from Gartland's, and no sooner perceived Reillaghan, whom he immediately recognized by his great height, than he took another path in order to avoid him. The enmity between these rivals was deep and implacable; aggravated on the one hand by a sense of unmerited injury, and on the other by personal defeat and the bitterest jealousy. For this reason neither of them wished to meet, particularly Frank M'Kenna, who not only hated, but feared his enemy.

Having succeeded in avoiding Reillaghan, the latter soon reached home; but here he found the door closed, and the family, without a single exception, in the barn, which was now nearly crowded with the youngsters of both sexes from the surrounding villages.

Frank's arrival amongst them gave a fresh impulse to their mirth and enjoyment. His manners were highly agreeable, and his spirits buoyant almost to levity. Notwithstanding the badness of his character in the opinion of the sober, steady, and respectable inhabitants of the parish, yet he was a favourite with the dissolute and thoughtless, and with many who had not an opportunity of seeing him except in his most favourable aspect. Whether he entertained on this occasion any latent design that might have induced him to assume a frankness of manner, and an appearance of good-humour, which he did not feel, it is difficult to determine. Be this as it may, he made himself generally agreeable, saw that every one was comfortable, suggested an improvement in the arrange-

ment of the seats, broke several jests on Barney and Granua Waile—which, however, were returned with interest—and, in fact, acquitted himself so creditably, that his father whispered with a sigh to his mother—

"Alley, achora, would'nt we be the happy family if that misfortunate boy of ours was to be always the thing he appears to be? God help him! the gommach, if he had sinse, and the fear o' God before him, he'd not be sich a piece of desate to strangers and sich a divil's limb wid ourselves: but he's young, an' may see his evil coorses in time, wid the help o' God!"

"Musha, may God grant it!" exclaimed his mother: "a fine slip he is, if his heart 'ud only turn to the right thoughts. One can't help feeling pride out o' him, when they see him actin' wid any kind o' rason."

The Irish dance, like every other assembly composed of Irishmen and Irishwomen, presents the spectator with those traits which enter into our conception of rollicking fun and broad humour. The very arrangements are laughable; and when joined to the eccentric strains of some blind fiddler like Barney *Dhal*, to the grotesque and caricaturish faces of the men, and the modest, but evidently arch and laughter-loving countenances of the females, they cannot fail to impress an observing mind with the obvious truth, that a nation of people so thoughtless and easily directed from the serious and useful pursuits of life to such scenes, can seldom be industrious and wealthy, nor, despite their mirth and humour, a happy people.

The barn in which they danced on this occasion was a large one. Around the walls were placed as many seats as could be spared from the neighbours' houses; these were eked out by sacks of corn laid lengthwise, logs of round timber, old creels, iron pots with their bottoms turned up, and some of them in their usual position. On these were the youngsters seated, many of the "boys" with their sweethearts on their knees, the arms of the fair ones lovingly around

their necks; and, on the contrary, many of the young women with their bachelors on their laps, their own necks also gallantly encircled by the arms of their admirers. Up in a corner sat Barny, surrounded by the seniors of the village, sawing the fiddle with indefatigable vigour, and leading the conversation with equal spirit. Indeed, his laugh was the loudest, and his joke the best, whilst, ever and anon, his music became perfectly furious; that is to say, when he rasped the fiddle with a desperate effort "to overtake the dancers," from whom, in the heat of the conversation, he had unwittingly lagged behind.

Dancing in Ireland, like everything else connected with the amusement of the people, is frequently productive of bloodshed. It is not unusual for crack-dancers from opposite parishes, or from distant parts of the same parish, to meet and dance against each other for victory. But as the judges in those cases consist of the respective friends or factions of the champions, their mode of decision may readily be conjectured. Many a battle is fought in consequence of such challenges, the result usually being that not he who has the lightest heel, but the hardest head, generally comes off the conqueror.

While the usual variety of Irish dances—the reel, jig, fling, three-part-reel, four-part-reel, rowly-powly, country-dance, *cotillion*, or cut-along, (as the peasantry call it) and minuet, vulgarly minion and minionet—were going forward in due rotation, our readers may be assured that those who were seated around the walls did not permit the time to pass without improving it. Many an attachment is formed at such amusements, and many a bitter jealousy is excited; the prude and coquette, the fop and rustic Lothario, stand out here as prominently to the eye of him who is acquainted with human nature, as they do in similar assemblies among the great: perhaps more so, as there is less art, and a more limited knowledge of intrigue, to conceal their natural character.

The dance in Ireland usually commences with those who sit next the door, from whence it goes round with the sun. In this manner it circulates two or three times, after which the order is generally departed from, and they dance according as they can. This neglect of the established rule is also a fertile source of discord; for when two persons rise at the same time, if there be not room for both, the matter is often decided by blows.

At the dance we are describing, however, there was no dissension; every heart appeared to be not only elated with mirth, but also free from resentment and jealousy. The din produced by the thumping of vigorous feet upon the floor, the noise of the fiddle, the chat between Barny and the little sober knot about him, together with the brisk murmur of the general conversation, and the expression of delight which sat on every countenance, had something in them elevating to the spirits.

Barny, who knew the voices, and even the mode of dancing peculiar to almost every one in the barn, had some joke for each. When a young man brings out his sweetheart—which he frequently does in a manner irresistibly ludicrous, sometimes giving a spring from the earth, his *caubeen* set with a knowing air on one side of his head, advancing at a trot on tip-toe, catching her by the ear, leading her out to her position, which is "to face the fiddler," then ending by a snap of the fingers, and another spring, in which he brings his heel backwards in contact with his ham;—we say, when a young man brings out his sweetheart, and places her facing the fiddler, he asks her what she will dance; to which, if she has no favourite tune, she uniformly replies—"Your will is my pleasure." This usually made Barney groan aloud.

"What ails you, Barny?"

"Oh, thin, murdher alive, how little thruth's in this world! Your will's my pleasure! *Baithershin!* but, sowl, if things goes an, it won't be long so!"

"Why, Barny," the young man would exclaim, "is the ravin' fit comin' over you?"

"No, in throth, Jim; *but it's thinkin' of home I am.* Howandiver, do you go an; but, *naboklish!*—What'll you have?"

"'Jig Polthouge,' Barny: but oil your wrist, a bouchall, or Katty will lave us both out o' sight in no time. Whoo! success! clear the coorse. Well done, Barny! That's the go."

When the youngsters had danced for some time, the fathers and mothers of the village were called upon "to step out." This was generally the most amusing scene in the dance. No excuse is ever taken on such occasions, for when they refuse, about a dozen young fellows place them, will they nil they, upright upon the floor, from whence neither themselves nor their wives are permitted to move until they dance. No sooner do they commence, than they are mischievously pitted against each other by two sham parties, one encouraging the wife, the other cheering on the good man; whilst the fiddler, falling in with the frolic, plays in his most furious style. The simplicity of character, and, perhaps, the lurking vanity of those who are the butts of the mirth on this occasion, frequently heighten the jest.

"Why thin, Paddy, is it strivin' to outdo me you are? Faiks, avourneen, you never seen that day, any way," the old woman would exclaim, exerting all her vigour.

"Did'nt I? Sowl, I'll sober you before I lave the flure, for all that," her husband would reply.

"An' do you forget," she would rejoin, "that the M'Carthy dhrop is in me; ay, an' it's to the good still."

And the old dame would accompany the boast with a fresh attempt at agility; to which Paddy would respond by "cutting the buckle," and snapping his fingers, whilst fifty voices, amidst roars of laughter, were loud in encouraging each.

"Handle your feet, Katty, darlin'—the mettle's lavin' him!"

"Off wid the brogues, Paddy, or she'll do you. That's it; kick off the other, an' don't spare the flure."

"A thousand guineas an Katty! M'Carthy agin Gallagher for ever!—whirroo!"

"Blur alive the flure's not benefitin' by you, Paddy. Lay an it, man! That's it! Bravo! Whish! our side agin Europe!"

"Success, Paddy! Why you could dance the Dusty Miller upon a flure paved wid drawn razures, you're so soople."

"Katty for ever! The blood's in you, Katty; you'll win the day, *a ban choir!** More power to you!"

"I'll hould a quart on Paddy. Heel an' toe, Paddy, you sinner!"

"Right an' left, Katty; hould an, his breath's goin'."

"Right an' wrong, Paddy, you spalpeen. The whisky's an you, man alive; do it dacently, an' don't let me lose the wager."

In this manner would they incite some old man, and, perhaps, his older wife, to prolonged exertion, and keep them bobbing and jigging about amidst roars of laughter, until the worthy couple could dance no longer.

During stated periods of the night, those who took the most prominent part in the dance, got a plate and hat, with which they went round the youngsters, to make collections for the fiddler. Barny reserved his best and most sarcastic jokes for these occasions; for so correct was his ear, that he felt little difficulty in detecting those whose contributions to him were such as he did not relish.

The aptitude of the Irish for enjoying humorous

* Decent woman.

images was well displayed by one or two circumstances which occurred on this night. A few of both sexes, who had come rather late, could get no other seats than the iron pots to which we have alluded. The young women were dressed in white, and their companions, who were also their admirers, exhibited in proud display, each a bran new suit, consisting of broad-cloth coat, yellow-buff vests, and corduroy small-clothes, with a bunch of broad silk ribbons standing out at each knee. They were the sons and daughters of respectable farmers, but as all distinctions here entirely ceased, they were fain to rest contented with such seats as they could get, which on this occasion consisted of the pots aforesaid. No sooner, however, had they risen to dance, than the house was convulsed with laughter, heightened by the sturdy vigour with which, unconscious of their appearance, they continued to dance. That part of the white female dresses which had come in contact with the pots, exhibited a circle like the full moon, and was black as pitch. Nor were their partners more lucky: those who sat on the mouths of the pots had the back part of their dresses streaked with dark circles, equally ludicrous. The mad mirth with which they danced, in spite of their grotesque appearance, was irresistible. This, and other incidents quite as pleasant—such as the case of a wag who purposely sank himself into one of the pots, until it stuck to him through half the dance—increased the laughter, and disposed them to peace and cordiality.

No man took a more active part in these frolics than young Frank M'Kenna. It is true, a keen eye might have noticed under his gaiety something of a moody and dissatisfied air. As he moved about from time to time, he whispered something to above a dozen persons who were well-known in the country as his intimate companions, young fellows whose disposition and character were notoriously bad. When he communicated the whisper, a nod of assent was given by his

confidants, after which it might be remarked that they moved round to the door with a caution that betrayed a fear of observation, and quietly slunk out of the barn, though Frank himself did not immediately follow them. In about a quarter of an hour afterwards, Rody came in, gave him a signal, and sat down. Frank then followed his companions, and after a few minutes Rody also disappeared. This was about ten o'clock, and the dance was proceeding with great gaiety and animation.

Frank's dread of openly offending his parents prevented him from assembling his associates in the dwelling-house; the only convenient place of rendezvous, therefore, of which they could avail themselves, was the stable. Here they met, and Frank, after uncorking a bottle of poteen, addressed them to the following effect:

"Boys, there's great excuse for me, in regard of my fight wid Mike Reillaghan; that you'll all allow. Come, boys, your healths! I can tell yees you'll find this good, the divil a doubt of it; be the same token, that I stole it from my father's Christmas dhrink; but no matther for that—I hope we'll never do worse. So, as I was sayin', you must bear me out as well as you can, when I'm brought before the Dilegates to-morrow, for chailengin' and strikin' a brother.* But, I think, you'll stand by me, boys?"

"By the tarn-o'-war, Frank, myself will fight to the knees for you."

"Faith, you may depend on *us*, Frank, or we're not to the fore."

"I know it, boys; and now for a piece of fun for this night. You see—come, Lanty, tare-an'-ounkers, dhrink, man alive—you see wid regard to Peggy Gartland—eh? what the hell! is that a cough?"

* Those connected with illegal combinations are sworn to have no private or personal quarrels, nor to strike, nor provoke each other to fight. He and Mike were members of such societies.

"One o' the horses, man—go an."

"Rody, did Darby More go into the barn befor you came out of it?"

"Darby More? not he. If he did, I'd a seen him surely."

"Why, thin, I'd kiss the book I seen him goin' towards the barn, as I was comin' into the stable. Sowl, he's a made boy, that; an' if I don't mistake, he's in Mike Reillaghan's intherest. You know devil a sacret can escape him."

"Hut! the prayin' ould crathur was on his way to the Midnight Mass; he thravels slow, and, of coorse, has to set out early; besides, you know, he has Carols, and Bades, and the likes, to sell at the chapel."

"Thrue for you, Rody: why, I thought he might take it into his head to watch my motions, in regard that, as I said, I think him in Mike's intherest."

"Nonsense, man, what the dickens 'ud bring him into the stable loft? Why you're beside yourself?"

"Be Gor, I bleeve so, but no matther. Boys, I want yees to stand to me to-night: I'm given to know for a sartinty that Mike and Peggy will be buckled to durin' the hollydays. Now I wish to get the girl myself; for if I don't get her, may I be ground to atoms if he will."

"Well, but how will you manage? for she's fond of him."

"Why, I'll tell you that. I was over there this evenin', and I understood that all the family is goin' to the Midnight Mass, barrin' herself. You see, while they're all gone to the 'mallet-office,'* we'll slip down wid a thrifle o' soot on our mugs, and walk off wid her to Kilnaheery, beyant the mountains, to an uncle's o' mine; an' afther that, let any man marry her who chooses to run the risk. Be the contints o' the book, Atty, if you don't dhrink I'll knock your head agin the wall, you gommoch!"

* Mass.

"Why, thin, be all that's beautiful, it's a good spree; an' we'll stick to you like pitch."

"Be the vartue o' my oath, you don't desarve to be in it, or you'd dhrink dacent. Why, here's another bottle, an' maybe there's more where that was. Well, let us finish what we have, or be the five crasses, I'll give up the whole business."

"Why, thin, here's success to us, any way; an' high hangin' to them that 'ud desart you in your skame this blessed an' holy night that's in it!"

This was re-echoed by his friends, who pledged themselves by the most solemn oaths not to abandon him in the perpetration of the outrage which they had concerted. The other bottle was immediately opened, and while it lasted, the details of the plan were explained at full length. This over, they entered the barn one by one, except Frank and Rody, who, as they were determined to steal another bottle from the father's stock, did not appear among the dancers until this was accomplished.

The re-appearance of these rollicking and reckless young fellows in the dance, was hailed by all present; for their outrageous mirth was in character with the genius of the place. The dance went on with spirit; brag dancers were called upon to exhibit in hornpipes, and for this purpose a table was brought in from Frank's kitchen, on which they performed in succession, each dancer applauded by his respective party as the best in the barn.

In the mean time the night had advanced: the hour might be about half-past ten o'clock; all were in the zenith of enjoyment, when old Frank M'Kenna addressed them as follows:

"Neighbours, the dickens o' one o' me would like to break up the sport—an', in throth, harmless and dacent sport it is; but you all know that this is Christmas night, and that it's our duty to attind the Midnight Mass. Any body that likes to hear it may go, for it's near time to be home an' prepare for it; but the sorra

one o' me wants to take any of yees from your sport, if you prefer it: all I say is, that I must lave you; so God be wid yees till we meet agin!"

This short speech produced a general bustle in the barn; many of the elderly neighbours left it, and several of the young persons also. It was Christmas Eve, and the Midnight Mass had from time immemorial so strong a hold upon their prejudices and affections, that the temptation must indeed have been great which would have prevented them from attending it. When old Frank went out, about one-third of those who were present left the dance along with him, and as the hour for mass was approaching, they lost no time in preparing for it.

The Midnight Mass is, no doubt, a phrase familiar to our Irish readers; but we doubt whether those in the sister kingdoms who may honour our book with a perusal, would, without a more particular description, clearly understand it.

This ceremony was performed as a commemoration, not only of the night, but of the hour in which Christ was born. To connect it either with edification, or the abuse of religion would be invidious; so we overlook that, and describe it as it existed within our own memory, remarking, by the way, that though now generally discontinued, it is in some parts of Ireland still observed, or has been till within a few years ago.

The parish in which the scene of this story is laid was large, consequently the attendance of the people was proportionably great. On Christmas day a Roman Catholic priest has, or is said to have, the privilege of saying *three* masses, though on every other day in the year he can celebrate but two. Each priest, then, said one at midnight, and two on the following day.

Accordingly, about twenty or thirty years ago, the performance of the Midnight Mass was looked upon as an ordinance highly important and interesting. The preparations for it were general and fervent; so much

so, that not a Roman Catholic family slept till they heard it. It is true it only occurred once a year; but had any person who saw it *once* been called upon to describe it, he would say that religion could scarcely present a scene so wild and striking.

The night in question was very dark, for the moon had long disappeared, and as the inhabitants of the whole parish were to meet in one spot, it may be supposed that the difficulty was very great, of traversing, in the darkness of midnight, the space between their respective residences and the place appointed by the priest for the celebration of mass. This difficulty they contrived to surmount. From about eleven at night till twelve or one o'clock, the parish presented a scene singularly picturesque, and to a person unacquainted with its causes, altogether mysterious. Over the surface of the surrounding country were scattered myriads of blazing torches, all converging to one point; whilst at a distance, in the central part of the parish, which lay in a valley, might be seen a broad focus of red light, quite stationary, with which one or more of the torches that moved across the fields mingled every moment. These torches were of bog-fir, dried and split for the occasion; all persons were accordingly furnished with them, and by their blaze contrived to make way across the country with comparative ease. This Mass having been especially associated with festivity and enjoyment, was always attended by such excessive numbers, that the ceremony was in most parishes celebrated in the open air, if the weather were at all favourable. Altogether, as we have said, the appearance of the country at this dead hour of the night, was wild and impressive. Being Christmas, every heart was up, and every pocket replenished with money, if it could at all be procured. This general elevation of spirits was nowhere more remarkable than in contemplating the thousands of both sexes, old and young, each furnished, as before said, with a blazing flambeau of bog-fir, all streaming down

the mountain sides, along the roads, or across the fields, and settling at last into one broad sheet of fire. Many a loud laugh might then be heard ringing the night echo into reverberation; mirthful was the gabble in hard, guttural Irish; and now and then a song from some one whose potations had been rather copious, would rise on the night breeze, to which a chorus was subjoined by a dozen voices from the neighbouring groups.

On passing the shebeen and public houses, the din of mingled voices that issued from them was highly amusing, made up, as it was, of songs, loud talk, rioting and laughter, with an occasional sound of weeping from some one who had become penitent in his drink. In the larger public houses, for in Ireland there usually are one or two of these in the immediate vicinity of each chapel, family parties were assembled, who set in to carouse both before and after mass. Those, however, who had any love affair on hands generally selected the shebeen house, as being private, and less calculated to expose them to general observation. As a matter of course, these jovial orgies frequently produced such disastrous consequences both to human life and female reputation, that the intrigues between the sexes, the quarrels, and violent deaths resulting from them, ultimately occasioned the discontinuance of a ceremony which was only productive of evil. To this day it is an opinion among the peasantry in many parts of Ireland, that there is something unfortunate connected with all drinking bouts held upon Christmas Eve. Such a prejudice naturally arises from a recollection of the calamities which so frequently befel many individuals while Midnight Masses were in the habit of being celebrated.

None of Frank M'Kenna's family attended mass but himself and his wife. His children having been bound by all the rules of courtesy to do the honours of the dance, could not absent themselves from it; nor, indeed, were they disposed to do so. Frank, however,

and his "good woman," carried their torches, and joined the crowds which flocked to this scene of fun and devotion.

When they had arrived at the cross-roads beside which the chapel was situated, the first object that presented itself so prominently as to attract observation was Darby More, dressed out in all his paraphernalia of blanket and horn, in addition to which he held in his hand an immense torch, formed into the figure of a cross. He was seated upon a stone, surrounded by a ring of old men and women, to whom he sang and sold a variety of Christmas carols, many of them rare curiosities in their way, inasmuch as they were his own composition. A little beyond them stood Mike Reillaghan and Peggy Gartland, towards both of whom he cast from time to time a glance of latent humour and triumph. He did not simply confine himself to singing his carols; but, during the pauses of the melody, addressed the wondering and attentive crowd as follows:

"Good Christians—This is the day—howandiver, it's night now, glory be to God—that the angel Lucifer appeared to Shud'orth, Meeshach, an' To-bed-we-go, in the village of Constantinople, near Jerooslem. The heavens be praised for it, 'twas a blessed an' holy *night*, an' remains so from that *day* to this—Oxis doxis glorioxis, Amin! Well; the sarra one of him but appeared to thim at the hour o' midnight, but they were asleep at the time, you see, and did'nt persave him. So wid that he pulled out a horn like mine—an', by that same token, it's lucky to wear horns about one, from that day to this—an' he put it to his lips an' *tuck* a good dacent—I mane *gave* a good dacent blast that soon roused them. 'Are yees asleep?' says he, when they awoke: 'why then, bud-an'-age!' says he, 'isn't it a burnin' shame for able stout fellows like yees to be asleep at the hour o' midnight of all hours o' the night. Tare-an-age!' says he, 'get up wid yees, you dirty spalpeens! There's

St. Pathrick in Jerusalem beyant; the Pope's signin' his mittimus to Ireland, to bless it in regard that neither corn, nor barley, nor phaties will grow an the land in quensequence of a set of varmint that ates it up; an' there's not a glass of whisky to be had in Ireland for love or money' says Lucifer. 'Get up wid yees,' says he, 'an' go in an' get his blessin': sure there's not a Catholic in the counthry, barrin' Swaddlers, but's in the town by this,' says he: 'ay, an' many of the Protestants themselves, and the black mouths, an' blue-bellies, are gone in to get a share of it. And now,' says he, 'bekase you wor so heavy-headed, I ordher it from this out, that the present night is to be obsarved in the Catholic church all over the world, an' must be kep holy, an' no thrue Catholic ever will miss from this pariod an opportunity of bein' awake at midnight,' says he, 'glory be to God!' An' now, good Christians, you have an account o' the blessed carol I was singin for yees. They're but hapuns a-piece; an' any body that has the grace to keep one o' these about them, will never meet wid sudden deaths or accidents, sich as hangin', or drownin', or bein' taken suddenly wid a configuration inwardly. I wanst knew a holy man that had a dhrame—about a friend of his, it was. Will any of yees take one?—Thank you, a colleen: my blessin', the blessin' o' the pilgrim, be an you! God bless you, Mike Reillaghan; an' I'm proud that he put it into *your* heart to buy one for the rasons you know. An' now that Father Hoolaghan's comin', any of yees that 'ill want them 'ill find me here agin when mass is over—Oxis doxis glorioxis, Amin!"

The priest at this time made his appearance, and those who had been assembled on the cross-roads joined the crowd at the chapel. No sooner was it bruited among them that their pastor had arrived, than the noise, gabble, singing, and laughing were immediately hushed; the shebeen and public houses were left untenanted; and all flocked to the chapel-

green, where mass was to be said, as the crowd was too large to be contained within the small chapel.

Mike Reillaghan and Peggy Gartland were among the last who sought the "green;" as lovers, they probably preferred walking apart to the inconvenience of being jostled by the multitude. As they sauntered on slowly after the rest, Mike felt himself touched on the shoulder, and on turning round found Darby More beside him.

"It's painful to my feelins," observed the mendicant, "to have to say this blessed night that your father's son should act so shabby an' ondacent."

"Saints above! how, Darby?"

"Why, don't you know that only for me—for what I heard, an' what I tould you—you'd not have the purty girl here at your elbow? Wasn't it, as I said, his intintion to come an' whip up the colleen to Kilnaheery while the family 'ud be at mass; sure only for this, I say, you bosthoon, an' that *I* made you bring her to mass, where 'ud the purty colleen be? why half way to Kilnaheery, 'an the girl disgraced for ever!"

"Thrue for you, Darby, I grant it: but what do you want me to do?"

"Oh, for that matther, nothin' at all, Mike; only I suppose that when your tailor made the clothes an you, he put no pockets to them?"

"Oh, I see where you are, Darby! well here's a crown for you; an' when Peggy an' I's made man an' wife you'll get another."

"Mike, achora, I see you *are* your father's son still; now listen to me: first, you needn't fear sudden death while you keep that blessed carol about you; next, get your friends together goin' home, for Frank might jist take the liberty, wid about a score of his "boys," to lift her from you even thin. Do the thing I say—don't thrust him; an', moreover, watch in her father's house to-night wid your friends. Thirdly, make it up wid Frank; there's an oath upon you both,

you persave? Make it up wid him, if he axes you: don't have a broken oath upon you; for if you refuse, he'll get you put out o' connexion,* an' that 'ud plase him to the back-bone."

Mike felt the truth and shrewdness of this advice, and determined to follow it. Both young men had been members of an illegal society, and in yielding to their passions so far as to assault each other, had been guilty of perjury. The following Christmas-day had been appointed by their parish Delegates to take the quarrel into consideration; and the best means of escaping censure was certainly to express regret for what had occurred, and to terminate the hostility by an amicable adjustment of their disputes.

They had now reached the chapel-green, where the scene that presented itself was so striking and strange, that we will give the reader an imperfect sketch of its appearance. He who stood at midnight upon a little mount which rose behind the chapel, might see between five and six thousand torches, all blazing together, and forming a level mass of red dusky light, burning against the dark horizon. These torches were so close to each other that their light seemed to blend, as if they had constituted one wide surface of flame; and nothing could be more preternatural-looking than the striking and devotional countenances of those who were assembled at their midnight worship, when observed beneath this canopy of fire. The Mass was performed under the open sky, upon a table covered with the sacrificial linen and other apparatus for the ceremony. The priest stood, robed in white, with two large torches on each side of his book, reciting the prayers in a low, rapid voice, his hands raised, whilst the congregation were hushed and bent forward in the reverential silence of devotion, their faces touched by the strong blaze of the torches into an expression of deep solemnity. The scenery about the

* Secret party.

place was wild and striking; and the stars, scattered thinly over the heavens, twinkled with a faint religious light, that blended well with the solemnity of this extraordinary worship, and rendered the rugged nature of the abrupt cliffs and precipices, together with the still outline of the stern mountains, sufficiently visible to add to the wildness and singularity of the ceremony. In fact, there was an unearthly character about it; and the spectre-like appearance of the white robed priest, as he

"Muttered his prayer to the midnight air,"

would almost impress a man with the belief that it was a meeting of the dead, and that the priest was repeating, like the Grey Friar, his

"Mass of the days that were gone."

On the ceremony being concluded, the scene, however, was instantly changed: the lights were waved and scattered promiscuously among each other, giving an idea of confusion and hurry that was strongly contrasted with the death-like stillness that prevailed a few minutes before. The gabble and laugh were again heard loud and hearty, and the public and shebeen houses once more became crowded. Many of the young people made, on these occasions, what is called "a runaway;"* and other peccadilloes took place, for which the delinquents were "either read out from the altar," or sent probably to St. Patrick's Purgatory at Lough Derg, to do penance. Those who did not choose to stop in the whisky houses now hurried home with all speed, to take some sleep before early Mass, which was to be performed the next morning about day-break. The same number of lights might therefore be seen streaming in different ways over the parish; the married men holding the torches, and leading their wives; bachelors escorting their sweethearts, and not unfrequently extinguishing their flambeaus,

* Rustic elopement.

that the dependence of the females upon their care and protection might more lovingly call forth their gallantry

When Mike Reillaghan considered with due attention the hint which Darby More had given him, touching the necessity of collecting his friends as an escort for Peggy Gartland, he had strong reasons to admit its justness and propriety. After Mass he spoke to about two dozen young fellows who joined him and under their protection Peggy now returned safely to her father's house.

Frank M'Kenna and his wife reached home about two o'clock; the dance was comparatively thin, though still kept up with considerable spirit. Having solemnized himself by the grace of so sacred a rite, Frank thought proper to close the amusement, and recommend those whom he found in the barn to return to their respective dwellings.

"You have had a merry night, childher," said he; "but too much o' one thing's good for nothin'; so don't make a toil of a plasure, but go all home dacently an' soberly, in the name o' God."

This advice was accordingly followed. The youngsters separated, and M'Kenna joined his family, "to have a sup along wid them an' Barny, in honour of what they had hard." It was upon this occasion he missed his son Frank, whose absence from the dance he had not noticed since his return till then.

"Musha, where's Frank?" he inquired: "I'll warrant him away wid his blackguards upon no good. God look down upon him! Many a black heart has that boy left us! If it's not the will o' heaven, I fear he'll come to no good. Barny, is he long gone from the dance?"

"Throth, Frank, wid the noise an' dancin', an' me bein' *dark*," replied Barny, shrewdly, "I can't take an me to say. For all you spake agin him, the sorra one of him but's a clane, dacent, spirited boy, as there is widin a great ways of him. Here's all your health's! Faix, girls, you'll all sleep sound to-night."

"Well," said Mrs. M'Kenna, "the knowledge of that Darby More is onknowable! Here's a carol I bought from him, an' if you wor but to hear the explanations he put to it! Why Father Hoolaghan could hardly outdo him!"

"Divil a man in the five parishes can dance 'Jig Polthogue' wid him, for all that," said Barny. "Many a time Granua an' I played it for him, an' you'd know the tune upon his feet. He undherstands a power o' ranns an' prayers, an' has charms an' holy herbs for all kind of ailments, no doubt."

"These men, you see," observed Mrs. M'Kenna, in the true spirit of credulity and superstition, "may do many things that the likes of us oughtn't to do, by rason of their great fastin' an' prayer."

"Thrue for you, Alley," replied her husband, "but come, let us have a sup more in comfort: the sleep's gone *a shraugran* an us this night, any way, so, Barny, give us a song, an' afther that we'll have a taste o' prayers, to close the night."

"But you don't think of the long journey I've before me," replied Barny: "howandiver, if you promise to send some one home wid me, we'll have the song. I wouldn't care, but the night bein' dark, you see, I'll want somebody to guide me."

"Faith, an' it's but rasonable, Barny, an' you must get Rody home wid you. I suppose he's asleep in his bed by this, but we'll rouse him!"

Barny replied with a loud laugh, for this was one of his standing jests.

"Well, Frank," said he, "I never thought you war so soft, an' me can pick my steps the same at night as in daylight. Sure that's the way I *done* them to-night, when one o' Granua's strings broke. 'Sweets o' rosin,' says I; 'a candle—bring me a candle immediately.' An' down came Rody in all haste wid a candle. 'Six eggs to you, Rody,' says myself, 'an' half-a-dozen o' them addle! but you're a bright boy, to bring a lit

candle to a blind man!' and then he stood a *bouloare* to the whole house—ha, ha, ha!"

Barny, who was not the man to rise first from the whisky, commenced the relation of his choicest anecdotes; old Frank and the family, being now in a truly genial mood, entered into the spirit of his jests, so that between chat, songs, and whisky, the hour had now advanced to four o'clock. The fiddler was commencing another song, when the door opened, and Frank presented himself, nearly, but not altogether in a state of intoxication; his face was besmeared with blood; and his whole appearance that of a man under the influence of strong passion, such as would seem to be produced by disappointment and defeat.

"What!" said the father; "is it snowin', Frank? Your clothes are covered wid snow!"

"Lord, guard us!" exclaimed the mother, "is that blood upon your face, Frank?"

"It *is* snowin', and it *is* blood that's upon my face," answered Frank, moodily—"do you want to know more news?"

"Why, ay indeed," replied his mother, "we want to hear how you came to be cut?"

"You won't hear it, thin," he replied.

The mother was silent, for she knew the terrible fits of passion to which he was subject.

The father groaned deeply, and exclaimed—"Frank, Frank, God help you, an' show you the sins you're committin', an' the heart-scaldin' you're givin' both your mother an' me! What fresh skrimmage had you that you're in that state?"

"Spare yourself the throuble of inquirin'," he replied: "all I can say," he continued, starting up into sudden fury—"all I can say, an' I say it—I swear it—where's the prayer-book?" and he ran franticly to a shelf beside the dresser on which the prayer-book lay, "ay! by him that made me I'll sware it—by this sacred book, while I live, Mike Reillaghan, the husband of Peggy Gartland you'll never be, if I should swing

for it! Now you all seen I kissed the book!" As he spoke, he tossed it back upon the shelf.

The mirth that had prevailed in the family was immediately hushed, and a dead silence ensued; Frank sat down, but instantly rose again, and flung the chair from him with such violence that it was crashed to pieces; he muttered oaths and curses, ground his teeth, and betrayed all the symptoms of jealousy, hatred, and disappointment.

"Frank, abouchal," said Barny, commencing to address him in a conciliatory tone—"Frank, man alive"——

"Hould your tongue, I say, you blind vagabone, or by the night above us, I'll break your fiddle over your skull, if you dar to say another word. What I swore I'll do, an' let no one crass me."

He was a powerful young man, and such was his temper, and so well was it understood, that not one of the family durst venture a word of remonstrance.

The father rose, went to the door, and returned. "Barny," said he, "you must contint yourself where you are for this night. It's snowin' heavily, so you had betther sleep wid Rody; I see a light in the barn, I suppose he's after bringin' in his bed an' makin' it."

"I'll do anything," replied the poor fiddler, now apprehensive of violence from the outrageous temper of young Frank.

"Well, thin," added the good man, "let us all go to bed, in the name of God. Micaul, bring Barny to the barn, and see that he's comfortable."

This was complied with, and the family quietly and timidly retired to rest, leaving the violent young man storming and digesting his passion, behind them.

Mass on Christmas morning was then, as now, performed at day-break, and again the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the parish were up betimes to attend it. Frank M'Kenna's family were assembled, notwithstanding their short sleep, at an early breakfast; but their meal, in consequence of the unpleasant sensation

produced by the outrage of their son, was less cheerful than it would otherwise have been. Perhaps, too, the gloom which hung over them, was increased by the snow that had fallen the night before, and by the wintry character of the day, which was such as to mar much of their expected enjoyment. There was no allusion made to their son's violence over night; neither did he himself appear to be in any degree affected by it. When breakfast was over, they prepared to attend mass, and, what was unusual, young Frank was the first to set out for the chapel.

"Maybe," said the father, after he was gone—"maybe that fool of a boy is sarry for his behaviour. It's many a day since I knew him to go to mass of his own accord. It's a good sign, any way."

"Musha," inquired his mother, "what could happen atween him an' that civil boy, Mike Reillaghan?"

"The sorra one o' me knows," replied his father; "an' now that I think of it, sure enough there was none o' them at the dance last night, although I sent himself down for them. Micaul," he added, addressing the other son, "will you put an your big coat, slip down to Reillaghan's, an' bring me word what came atween them at all; an' tell Owen himself the thruth, that this boy's brakin' our hearts by his coorses."

Micaul, who, although he knew the cause of the enmity between these rivals, was ignorant of that which occasioned his brother's rash oath, also felt anxious to ascertain the circumstances of the last quarrel. For this purpose, as well as in obedience to his father's wishes, he proceeded to Reillaghan's, and arrived just as Darby More and young Mike had set out for mass.

"What," said the mendicant, "can be bringin' Micaul down, I wondher? somethin' about that slip o' grace, his brother."

"I suppose so," said Mike; "an' I wish the same slip was as dacent an' inoffensive as he is. I don't know a boy livin' I'd go farther for nor the same Mi-

caul. He's a credit to the family as much as the other's a stain upon them."

"Well, any how, you war Frank's match, an' more, last night. How bitther he was bint on bringin' Peggy aff, when he an' his set waited till they seen the country clear, an' thought the family asleep! Had you man for man, Mike?"

"Ay, about that; an' we sat so snug in Peggy's that you'd hear a pin fallin'. A hard tug, too, there was in the beginnin'; but whin they found that we had a strong back, they made away, an' we gave them purshute from about the house."

"You may thank me, any how, for having' her to the good; but I knew by my dhrame, wid the help o' God, that there was somethin' to happen; by the same a token, that your mother's an the high horse about that dhrame. I'm to tell it to her, wid the sinse of it, in the evening', when the day's past, an' all of us in comfort."

"What was it, Darby; sure you may let me hear it?"

"Maybe I will in the evenin'. It was about you an' Peggy, the darlin'. But how will you manage in regard of brakin' the oath, an' sthrikin' a brother?"

"Why, that I couldn't get over it, whin *he* sthruck me first: sure he's worse off. I'll lave it the Dilegates, an' whatever judgment they give out, I'll take wid it."

"Well," observed Darby, sarcastically, "it made him do one good turn, any way."

"What was that, Darby; for good turns are but scarce wid him?"

"Why it made it him hear mass to-day," replied the mendicant; "an' that's what he hadn't the grace to do this many a year. It's away in the mountains wid his gun he'd be, thracin', an' a fine day it is for it—only this business prevints him. Now, Mike," observed Darby, "as we're comin' out upon the *boreen*,

I'll fall back, an' do you go an: I have part of my *padareens* to say, before I get to the chapel, wid a blessin'; an' we had as good not be seen together."

The mendicant, as he spoke, pulled out a long pair of beads, on which he commenced his prayers, occasionally accosting an acquaintance with a *gho mhany Deah ghud*,* and sometimes taking a part in the conversation for a minute or two, after which he resumed the prayers as before.

The day was now brightening up, although the earlier part of the morning had threatened severe weather. Multitudes were flocking to the chapel; the men well secured in frieze great coats, in addition to which, many of them had their legs bound with straw ropes, and others with leggings made of old hats cut up for the purpose. The women were secured with cloaks, the hoods of which were tied with kerchiefs of some showy colour, over their bonnets or their caps, which, together with their elbows projecting behind, for the purpose of preventing their dress from being dabbled in the snow, gave them a marked and most picturesque appearance.

Reillaghan and M'Kenna both reached the chapel a considerable time before the arrival of the priest; and as a kind of Whiteboy committee was to sit for the purpose of investigating their conduct in holding out so dangerous an example as they did, by striking each other, contrary to their oaths as brothers under the same system, they accordingly were occupied each in collecting his friends, and conciliating those whom they supposed to be hostile to them on the opposite party. It had been previously arranged that this committee should hold a court of inquiry, and that, provided they could not agree, the matter was to be referred to two hedge-schoolmasters, who should act as umpires; but if it happened that the latter could not

* God save you.

decide it, there was no other tribunal appointed to which a final appeal could be made.

According to these regulations, a court was opened in a shebeen-house that stood somewhat distant from the road. Twelve young fellows seated themselves on each side of a deal table, with one of the umpires at each end of it, and a bottle of whisky in the middle. In a higher sphere of life it is usual to refer such questionable conduct as occurs in duelling, to the arbitration of those who are known to be qualified by experience in the duello. On this occasion the practice was not departed from, those who had been thus selected as the Committee, being the most notoriously pugnacious "boys" in the whole parish.

"Now, boys," said one of the schoolmasters, "let us proceed to operations wid proper spirit," and he filled a glass of whisky as he spoke. "Here's all your healths, and next, pace and unanimity to us! Call in the culprits."

Both were accordingly admitted, and the first speaker resumed—"Now, in the second place, I'll read yees that part o' the oath which binds us all under the obligation of not strikin' one another—hem! hem!—'No brother is to strike another, knowing him to be such; he's to strike him—hem!—neither in fair nor market, at home nor abroad, neither in public nor in private, neither on Sunday nor week-day, present or absent, nor—'

"I condimn that," observed the other master—"I condimn it, as bein' too latitudinarian in principle, an' containing a paradogma; besides it's bad grammar."

"You're rather arly in the market wid your bad grammar," replied the other; "I'll grant you the paradogma, but I'll stand up for the grammar of it while I'm able to stand up for anything."

"Faith, an' if you rise to stand up for that," replied his friend, "and doesn't choose to sit down till you prove it to be good grammar, you'll be a standin' joke all your life."

"I bleeve it's purty conspicuous in the parish, that I have often, in our disputations about grammar, left you widout a leg to stand upon at all," replied the other.

This sally was well received, but his opponent was determined to push home the argument at once.

"I would be glad to know," he inquired, "by what beautiful invintion a man could contrive to strike another in his *absence?* Have you good grammar for *that?*

"And did you never hear of detraction?" replied his opponent; "that is, a man who's in the habit of spaking falsehoods of his friends whin their backs are turned—that is to say, whin they are absent. Now, sure, if a man's absent whin his back's turned, mayn't any man whose back's turned, be said to be absent; ergo, to strike a man behind his back is to strike him whin he's absent. Does that confound you? where's your logic and grammar to meet proper ratiocination like what I'm displaying?"

"Faith," replied the other, "you may have had logic and grammar, but I'll take my oath it was in your younger years, for both have been *absent* ever since I knew you: they turned their *backs* upon you man alive; for they didn't like, you see, to be keepin' bad company—ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you poor cratur," said his antagonist, "if I choose to let myself out, I'd make a hare of you in no time entirely."

"And an ass of yourself," retorted the other: "but you may save yourself the throuble in regard of the last, for your frinds know you to be an ass ever since they remimber you. You have them here, man alive, the auricles," and he pointed to his ears.

"Hut! get out wid you, you poor Jamaica-headed castigator you; sure you never had more nor a thimble full o' sinse on any subject."

"Faith, an' the thimble that measured yours was a

tailor's, one without a bottom in it, an' good measure you got, you miserable flagellator! what are you but a *nux vomica?* A fit o' the ague's a thrifle compared to your asinity."

The "boys" were delighted at this encounter, and utterly forgetful of the pacific occasion on which they had assembled, began to pitt them against each other with great glee.

"That's a hard hit, Misther Costigan; but you won't let it pass, any how."

"The ague an' you are ould acquaintances," retorted Costigan; "whenever a skrimmage takes place, you're sure to resave a visit from it."

"Why, I'm not such a haro as yourself," replied his rival, "nor such a great hand at batin' the *absent*—ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Misther Connell—that's a leveller; come, Misther Costigan, bedad if you don't answer that you're bate."

"By this and by that, man alive, if you don't mend your manners, maybe I'd make it betther for you to be absent also. You'll only put me to the throuble of mendin' them for you."

"Mend my manners!" exclaimed his opponent, with a bitter sneer,—"*you* to mend them! out wid you're budget and hammer, then; you're the very tinker of good manners—bekase for one dacency you'd mend, you'd spoil twenty."

"I'm able to hammer you at all evints, or, for that matther, any one of your illiterate gineration. Sure it's well known that you can't tache Voshther (Voster) widout the Kay."

"Hould there, if you plase," exclaimed one of his opponent's relations; "don't lug in his family; that's known to be somewhat afore your own, I bleeve. There's no *informers* among them, Misther Costigan: keep at home, masther, if you plase."

"At home! that's more than some o' your own

*cleaveens** have been able to do," rejoined Costigan, alluding to one of the young fellow's acquaintances who had been transported.

"Do you mane to put an affront upon me?" said the other.

"Since the *barrhad*† fits you, wear it," replied Costigan.

"Very right, masther, make him a present of it," exclaimed one of Costigan's distant relations; "he desarves that, an' more if he'd get it."

"Do I?" said the other; "an' what have *you* to say on the head of it, Bartle?"

"Why, not much," answered Bartle, "only that you ought to've left it betune them; an' that *I'll* back Misther Costigan agin any rascal that 'ud say there was ever a dhrop of his blood in an Informer's veins."

"I say it for one," replied the other.

"And I, for another," said Connell; "an' what's worse, I'll hould a wager, that if he was searched this minute, you'd find a Kay to Gough in his pocket, although he throws Voshther in my teeth: the dunce never goes widout one. Sure he's not able to set a dacent copy, or head-line, or to make a dacent hook, nor a hanger, nor a down stroke, and was a poor scholar, too!"

"I'll give you a down stroke in the mane time, you ignoramus," said the pedagogue, throwing himself to the end of the table at which his enemy sat, and laying him along the floor by a single blow.

He was instantly attacked by the friend of the prostrate academician, who was in his turn attacked by the friend of Costigan. The adherents of the respective teachers were immediately rushing to a general engagement, when the door opened, and Darby More made his appearance.

"Asy!—stop wid yees!—hould back, ye disgraceful villains!" exclaimed the mendicant, in a thunder-

* Distant relations. † Cap.

ing voice; "be asy, I say. Saints in glory, is this the way you're settlin' the dispute between the two dacent young men, that's sorry, both o' them, I'll go bail, for what they done. Sit down, every one o' yees, or, by the blessed ordhers I wear about me, I'll report yees to Father Hoolaghan, an' have yees read out from the althar, or sint to Lough Derg! Sit down, I say!"

As he spoke, he extended his huge cant between the hostile parties, and thrust them one by one to their seats with such muscular energy, that he had them sitting before another blow could be given.

"Saints in glory!" he exclaimed again, "isn't this blessed doins an the sacred day that's in it! that a poor helpless ould man like me can't come to get somethin' to take away this misfortunit touch o' configuration that I'm afflicted wid in cowld weather—that I can't take a little sup of the only thing that cures me—widout your ructions and battles! You came here to make pace between two dacent men's childher, an' you're as bad, if not worse, yourselves! Oh, wurrah dheelish, what's this! I'm in a downright agony! Oh, murdher sheery! Has none o' yees a hand to thry if there's e'er a dhrop of relief in that bottle? or am I to die all out, in the face o' the world, for want of a sup o' somethin' to warm me?"

"Darby, thry the horn," said M'Kenna.

"Here, Darby," said one of them, "dhrink this off, an' my life for yours, it'll warm you to the marrow!"

"Och, musha, but I wanted it badly," replied Darby, swallowing it at once; "it's the only thing does me good when I'm this way. *Deah Grasthias!** Oxis Doxis Glorioxis. Amin!"

"I think," said M'Kenna, "that what's in the horn's far afore it."

"Oh, thin, you thoughtless crathur, if you knew somethin' I hard about you awhile ago, you'd think

* God be praised.

otherwise. But, indeed, it's thrue for you; I'm sure I'd be sarry to compare what's in *it*, to anything o' the kind I tuck. *Deah Grasthias!* Throth, I'm asier now a great dale nor I was."

"Will you take another sup, Darby?" inquired the young fellow in whose hands the bottle was now nearly empty; there's jist about another glass."

"Indeed an' I will, *a villish;** an' sure you'll have my blessin' for it, an' barrin' the priest's own, you couldn't have a more luckier one, blessed be God for it—sure *that's* well known. In throth, they never came to ill that had it, an' never did good that got my curse! Houp! do you hear how that rises the wind off o' my stomach? Houp!—*Deah Grasthias* for that!"

"How did you larn all the prayers an' charms you have, Darby?" inquired the bottle-holder.

"It would take me too long to tell you that, *a villish!* But, childher, now that you're all together, make it up wid one another. Aren't you all frinds an' brothers, *sworn* brothers, an why would you be fightin' among other? Misther Costigan, give me your hand; sure I heard a thrifle o' what you were sayin' while I was suckin' my dudeen at the fire widout. Come here, Misther Connell. Now, before the saints in glory, I lay my bitther curse an him that refuses to shake hands wid his inemy. There now—I'm proud to see it. Mike, avourneen, come here—Frank M'Kenna, *gutsho*,† walk over here; my bitter heart's curse upon both of yees, if you don't make up all quarrels this minnit! Are you willin', Mike Reillaghan?"

"I have no objection in life," replied Mike, "if he'll say that Peggy Gartland won't be put to any more throuble through his manes."

"There's my hand, Mike," said Frank, "that I forget an' forgive all that's past; an' in regard o' Peggy

* My sweet!—an epithet of endearment.
† Come hither.

Gartland, why, as she's so dark agin me, I lave her to you for good."*

"Well! see what it is to have the good intintions! —to be makin' pace an' frindship atween inemies! That's all I think about, an' nothin' gives me greater pleas—Saints o' glory!—what's this!—oh, wurra!—that thief of a—wurrah dheelish!—that touch o' configuration 's comin' back agin!—oh, thin, but it's hard to get it undher!—oh!"—

"I'm sarry for it, Darby," replied he who held the now empty bottle; "for the whisky's out."

"Throth, an' I'm sarry myself, for nothin' else does me good; an' Father Hoolaghan says nothin' *can* keep it down, barrin' the sup o' whiskey. It's best burnt, wid a little bit o' butther an it; but I can't get that always, it overtakes me so suddenly. Glory be to God!"

"Well," said M'Kenna, "as Mike an' myself was the manes of bringin' us together, why, if he joins me, we'll have another bottle."

"Throth, an' it's fair an' dacent, an' he must do it; by the same a token, that I'll not lave the house till it's dhrunk, for there's no thrustin' yees together, you're so hot-headed an' ready to rise the hand," said Darby.

M'Kenna and Mike, having been reconciled, appeared in a short time warmer friends than ever. While the last bottle went round, those who had before been on the point of engaging in personal conflict, now laughed at their own foibles, and expressed the kindness and good-will which they felt for each other at heart.

"Now," said the mendicant, "go all of you to mass, an' as soon as you can, to confission, for it's not good to have the broken oath an' the sin of it over one. Confiss it, an' have your consciences light: sure it's a happiness that you *can* have the guilt taken off o' yees, childhre."

* In future—all together.

"Thrue for you, Darby," they replied; "an we'll be thinkin' of your advice."

"Ay do, childhre; an' there's Father Hoolaghan comin' down the road, so, in the name o' Goodness, we haven't a minnit to lose."

They all left the shebeen house as he spoke except Frank and himself, who remained until they had gone out of hearing.

"Darby," said he, "I want you to come up to our house in the morning', an' bring along wid you the things that stamp the crass upon the skin wid: I'm goin' to get the crucifix put upon me. But on the paril o' your life, don't brathe a word of it to mortual."

"God enable you, avick! it's a good intintion. I will indeed be up wid you—airly, too, wid a blessin'. It is that, indeed—a good intintion, sure enough."

The parish chapel was about one hundred perches from the shebeen-house in which the "boys" had assembled; the latter were proceeding there in a body when Frank overtook them.

"Mike," said he aside to Reillaghan, "we'll have time enough—walk back a bit; I'll tell you what I'm thinkin', you never seen in your life a finer day for thracin'; what 'ud you say if we give the boys the slip, never heed mass, an' set off to the mountains?"

"Won't we have time enough afther mass?" said Reillaghan.

"Why, man, sure you *did* hear mass *once* to-day. Weren't you at it last night? No, indeed, we won't be time enough afther it; for this bein' Chris'mas day, we must be home at dinner time; you know it's not lucky to be from the family upon set days. Hang-an-ounty, come; we'll have fine sport! I have cock-sticks* enough. The best part of the day 'll be gone if we wait for mass. Come, and let us start."

* A cock-stick was so called from being used on Cock-Monday, to throw at a cock tied to a stake. It was about the length of a common stick, but much heavier and thicker at one end.

"Well, well," replied Reillaghan, "the sarra hair I care; so let us go. I'd like myself to have a rap at the hares in the Black Hills, sure enough; but as it 'ud be remarkable for us to be seen lavin' mass, why let us crass the field here, an' get upon the road above the bridge."

To this his companion assented, and they both proceeded at a brisk pace, each apparently anxious for the sport, and resolved to exhibit such a frank cordiality of manner as might convince the other that all their past enmity was forgotten and forgiven.

Their direct path to the mountains lay by M'Kenna's house, where it was necessary they should call, in order to furnish themselves with cock-sticks, and to bring dogs which young Frank kept for the purpose. The inmates of the family were at mass, with the exception of Frank's mother, and Rody, the servant man, whom they found sitting on his own bed in the barn, engaged at cards, the right hand against the left.

"Well, Rody," said Frank, "who's winnin'?"

"The left entirely," replied his companion: "the divil a game at all the right's gettin,' whatever's the rason of it, an' I'm always turnin' up black. I hope none of my frinds or acquaintances will die soon."

"Throw them aside—quit of them," said Frank, "give them to me, I'll put them past; an' do you bring us out the gun. I've the powdher an' shot here; we may as well bring her, an' have a slap at them. One o' the officers in the barracks of —— keeps me in powdher an' shot, besides givin' me an odd crown, an' I keep him in game."

"Why, then, boys," observed Rody, "what's the manin' o' this?—two o' the biggest inimies in Europe last night an' this mornin', an' now as great as two thieves! How does that come?"

"Very asy, Rody," replied Reillaghan; "we made up the quarrel, shuck hands, an's good frinds as ever."

"Bedad, that bates cock-fightin'," said Rody, as he went to bring in the gun.

In the mean time, Frank, with the cards in his hand, went to the eve of the barn, thrust them up under the thatch, and took out of the same nook a flask of whisky.

"We'll want this," said he, putting it to his lips, and gulping down a portion. "Come, Mike, be tastin'; an' aftherwards put this in your pocket."

Mike followed his example, and was corking the flask when Rody returned with the gun.

"She's charged," said Frank; "but we'd betther put in fresh primin', for fraid of her hangin' fire."

He then primed the gun, and handed it to Reillaghan: "Do *you* keep the gun, Mike," he added, "an' I'll keep the cock-sticks. Rody, I'll bet you a shillin' I kill more wid the cock-stick, nor he will wid the gun. Will you take me up?"

"I know a safer thrick," replied Rody: "you're a dead aim wid the cockstick, sure enough, an' a deader wid the gun, too: catch me at it."

"You show some sinse, for a wondher," observed Frank, as he and his companion left the barn, and turned towards the mountains, which rose frowning behind the house.

Rody stood looking after them until they wound up slowly out of sight among the hills; he then shook his head two or three times, and exclaimed, "By dad, there's somethin' in this, if one could make out what it is. I know Frank."

Christmas-day passed among the peasantry, as it usually passes in Ireland. Friends met before dinner in their own, in their neighbours', in shebeen, or in public houses, where they drank, sang, or fought, according to their natural dispositions, or the quantity of liquor they had taken. The festivity of the day might be known by the unusual reek of smoke that danced from each chimney, by the number of persons who crowded the roads, by their bran-new dresses—for if a young man or country girl can afford a dress at all, they provide it for Christmas—and by the striking

appearance of those who, having drunk a little too much, were staggering home in the purest happiness, singing, stopping their friends, shaking hands with them, or kissing them, without any regard to sex. Many a time might be seen two Irishmen, who had got drunk together, leaving a fair or market, their arms about each other's neck, from whence they only removed them to kiss and hug one another the more lovingly. Notwithstanding this, there is nothing more probable than that these identical two will enjoy the luxury of a mutual battle, by way of episode, and again proceed on their way, kissing and hugging as if nothing had happened to interrupt their friendship. All the usual effects of jollity and violence, fun and fighting, love and liquor, were, of course, to be seen, felt, heard, and understood on this day, in a manner much more remarkable than on common occasions; for it may be observed, that the national festivals of the Irish bring out their strongest points of character with peculiar distinctness.

The family of Frank M'Kenna were sitting down to their Christmas dinner; the good man had besought a blessing upon the comfortable and abundant fare of which they were about to partake, and nothing was amiss, save the absence of their younger son.

"Musha, where on earth can this boy be stayin'?" said the father: "I'm sure this, above all days in the year, is one he oughtn't to be from home an."

The mother was about to inform him of the son's having gone to the mountains, when the latter returned, breathless, pale, and horror-struck.

Rody eyed him keenly, and laid down the bit he was conveying to his mouth.

"Heavens above us!" exclaimed his mother, "what ails you?"

He only replied by dashing his hat upon the ground, and exclaiming, "Up wid yees!—up wid yees!—quit your dinners!—Oh, Rody! what'll be done? Go down to Owen Reillaghan's—go 'way—go down

—an' tell thim—oh, *vick-na-hoie!* but this was the unfortunate day to us all!—Mike Reillaghan is shot wid my gun; she went off in his hand goin' over a snow wreath, an' he's lyin' dead in the mountains!"

The screams and wailing which immediately rose in the family were dreadful. Mrs. M'Kenna almost fainted; and the father, after many struggles to maintain his firmness, burst into the bitter tears of disconsolation and affliction. Rody was calmer, but turned his eyes from one to another with a look of deep compassion, and again eyed Frank keenly and suspiciously.

Frank's eye caught his, and the glance which had surveyed him with such scrutiny did not escape his observation. "Rody," said he, "do you go an' brake it to the Reillaghan's: you're the best to do it; for, when we were settin' out, you saw that *he* carried the gun, an' not *me.*"

"Thrue for you," said Rody; "I saw that, Frank, and can swear to it; but that's all I *did* see. I know nothing of what happened in the mountains."

"*Damnho sheery orth!** What do you mane, you villain?" exclaimed Frank, seizing the tongs, and attempting to strike him: "do you dar to suspect that I had any hand in it!"

"*Wurrah dheelish,*† Frank," screamed the sisters, are you goin' to murdher Rody?"

"Murdher," he shouted in a paroxysm of fury, "why the curse o' God upon you all, what puts murdher into your heads? Is it my own family that's the first to charge me wid it?"

"Why, there's no one chargin' you wid it," replied Rody; "not one, whatever makes you think so."

"An' what did you look at me, thin, the way you did? What did you look at me for, I say?"

"Is it any wondher," replied the servant, coolly, "when you had sich a dreadful story to tell?"

* Eternal perdition on you. † Sweet Virgin.

"Go off," replied Frank, now hoarse with passion —"go off, an' tell the Reillaghans what happened; but, by all the books that ever was opened or shut, if you breathe a word about murdh—about—if you do, you villain, I'll be the death o' you!"

When Rody was gone on this melancholy errand, old M'Kenna first put the tongs, and everything he feared might be used as a weapon by his frantic son, out of his reach; he then took down the book on which he had the night before sworn so rash and mysterious an oath, and desired the son to look upon it.

"Frank," said he, solemnly, "you swore on that blessed book last night, that Mike Reillaghan never would be the husband of Peggy Gartland. *He's a corpse to-day!* Yes," he continued, "the good, the honest, the industhrious boy is"——his sobs became so loud and thick that he appeared almost suffocated.

"Oh," said he, "may God pity *us!* As I hope to meet my blessed Saviour, who was born on this day, I would rather you wor the corpse, an' not Mike Reillaghan!"

"I don't doubt that," said the son, fiercely; "you never showed me much *grah*,* sure enough."

"Did you ever desarve it?" replied the father. "Heaven above me knows it was too much kindness was showed you. When you ought to have been well corrected, you got your will an' your way, an' now see the upshot."

"Well," said the son, "it's the last day ever I'll stay in the family; thrate me as bad as you plase. I'll take the king's money, an' list, if I live to see tomorrow."

"Oh, thin, in the name o' Goodness do so," said the father; "an' so far from previntin' you, we'll bless you when you're gone, for goin'."

"Arrah, Frank, aroon," said Mrs. M'Kenna, who was now recovered, "maybe, afther all, it was only an accident: sure we often hard of sich things. Don't

* Affection.

you remimber Squire Elliott's son, that shot himself by accident, out fowlin'? Frank, can you clear yourself afore us?"

"Ah, Alley! Alley!" exclaimed the father, wiping away his tears, "don't you remimber his *oath*, last night?"

"What oath?" inquired the son, with an air of surprise—"What oath, last night? I know I was dhrunk last night, but I remimber nothing about an oath."

"Do you deny it, you hardened boy?"

"I *do* deny it; an' I'm *not* a hardened boy. What do you all mane? do yees want to dhrive me mad? I know nothin' about any oath last night;" replied the son in a loud voice.

The grief of the mother and daughters was loud during the pauses of the conversation. Micaul, the eldest son, sat beside his father in tears.

"Frank," said he, "many an advice I gave you between ourselves, and you know how you tuck them. When you'd stale the oats, an' the meal, and the phayties, an' hay, at night, to have money for your cards an' dhrinkin', I kept it back, an' said nothin' about it. I wish I had'nt done so, for it wasn't for your good; but it was my desire to have as much pace and quietness as possible."

"Frank," said the father, eyeing him solemnly, "it's *possible* that you *do* forget the oath you made last night, for you war in liquor: I would give the wide world that it was thrue. Can you now, in the presence of God, clear yourself of havin' act or part in the death of Mike Reillaghan?"

"What 'ud ail me," said the son, "if I liked?"

"Will you do it now for our satisfaction, an' take a load of misery off of our hearts? It's the laste you may do, if you *can* do it. In the presence of the Great God, will you clear yourself now?"

"I suppose," said the son, "I'll have to clear myself to-morrow; an' there's no use in my doin' it more than wanst. When the time comes, I'll do it."

The father put his hands on his eyes, and groaned aloud: so deep was his affliction, that the tears trickled through his fingers during this fresh burst of sorrow. The son's refusal to satisfy them renewed the grief of all, as well as of the father: it rose again, louder than before, whilst young Frank sat opposite the door, silent and sullen.

It was now dark, but the night was calm and agreeable. M'Kenna's family felt the keen affliction which we have endeavoured to describe; the dinner was put hastily aside, and the festive spirit peculiar to this night became changed into one of gloom and sorrow. In this state they sat, when the voice of grief was heard loud in the distance; the strong cry of men, broken and abrupt, mingled with the shrieking wail of female lamentation.

The M'Kennas started, and Frank's countenance assumed an expression which it would be difficult to describe. There was, joined to his extreme paleness, a restless, apprehensive, and determined look; each trait apparently struggling for the ascendancy in his character, and attempting to stamp his countenance with his own expression.

"Do you hear *that?*" said his father. "Oh, musha, Father of heaven, look down an' support that family this night! Frank, if you take my advice, you'll lave their sight; for surely if they brained you on the spot, who could blame them?"

"Why ought I lave their sight?" replied Frank. "I tell you all that I had no hand in his death. The gun went off by accident as he was crassin' a wreath o' snow. I was afore him, and when I heard the report, an' turned round, there he lay, shot an' bleedin'. I thought it mightn't signify, but on looking at him closely, I found him quite dead. I then ran home, never touchin' the gun at all, till his family an' neighbours 'ud see him. Surely, it's no wondher I'd be distracted in my mind; but that's no rason you should all open upon me, as if *I* had murdhered the boy!"

"Well," said the father, "I'm glad to hear you say

even that much. I hope it may be better wid you than we all think; an' oh! grant it, sweet Mother o' Heaven, this day! Now carry yourself quietly afore the people. If they abuse you, don't fly into a passion, but make allowance for their grief and misery."

In the meantime, the tumult was deepening as it approached M'Kenna's house. The report had almost instantly spread through the village in which Reillaghan lived; and the loud cries of his father and brothers, who, in the wildness of their despair, continually called upon his name, had been heard at the houses which lay scattered over the neighbourhood. Their inmates, on listening to such unusual sounds, sought the direction from which they proceeded, for it was quite evident some terrible calamity had befallen the Reillaghans, in consequence of the son's name being borne on the blast of night with such loud and overwhelming tones of grief and anguish. The assembly, on reaching M'Kenna's, might, therefore, be numbered at thirty, including the females of Reillaghan's immediate family, who had been strung by the energy of despair to a capability of bearing any fatigue, or rather to an utter insensibility of all bodily suffering.

We must leave the scene which ensued to the reader's imagination, merely observing, that as neither the oath which young Frank had taken the preceding night, nor indeed the peculiar bitterness of his enmity towards the deceased, was known by the Reillaghans, they did not, therefore, discredit the account of his death which they had heard.

Their grief was exclamatory and full of horror; consisting of prolonged shrieks on the part of the women, and frantic howlings on that of the men. The only words they uttered were his name, with epithets and ejaculations. *Oh a Vichaul dheelish—a Vichaul dheelish—a bouchal bane machree—wuil thu marra—wuil thu marra?* "Oh, Michael, the beloved—Michael, the beloved—fair boy of our heart—are you dead? are you dead?"

From M'Kenna's the crowd, at the head of which

was Darby More, proceeded towards the mountains, many of them bearing torches, such as had been used on their way to the Midnight Mass. The moon had disappeared, the darkness was deepening, and the sky was overhung with black heavy clouds, that gave a stormy character to scenery, in itself remarkably wild and gloomy.

Young M'Kenna and the pilgrim led them to the dreary waste in which the corpse lay. It was certainly an awful spectacle to behold these unhappy people toiling up the mountain solitude at such an hour, their convulsed faces thrown into striking relief by the light of the torches, and their cries rising in wild irregular cadences upon the blast which swept over them with a dismal howl, in perfect character with their affliction, and the circumstances which produced it.

On arriving within view of the corpse, there was a slight pause; for, notwithstanding the dreadful paroxysms of their grief, there was something still more startling and terrible in contemplating the body thus stretched out in the stillness of death, on the lonely mountain. The impression it produced was peculiarly solemn: the grief was hushed for a moment, but only for a moment; it rose again wilder than before, and in a few minutes the friends of Reillaghan were about to throw themselves upon the body under the strong impulse of sorrow and affection.

The mendicant, however, stepped forward—"Hould back," said he; "it's hard to ax yees to do it, but still you must. Let the neighbours about us here examine the body, in ordher to see whether it mightn't be possible that the dacent boy came by his death from somebody else's hand than his own. Hould forrid the lights," said he, "till we see how he's lyin', an' how the gun's lyin'."

"Darby," said young Frank, "I can't but be oblaged to you for that. You're the last man livin' ought to say what you said, afther you seein' us both forget an' forgive this day. I call upon you now to say

whether you didn't see him an' me shakin' hands, an' buryin' all bad feelin' between us?"

"I'll spake to you jist now," replied the mendicant. "See here, neighbours, obsarve this; the boy was shot in the breast, an' here's not a snow wreath, but a weeshy dhrift that a child 'ud step across widout an accident. I tell yees all, that I suspect foul play in this."

"H——'s fire!" exclaimed the brother of the deceased, "what's that you say! What! Can it be—can it—can it— that you *murdhered* him, you villain, that's known to be nothin' but a villain? But I'll *do* for you!" He snatched at the gun as he spoke, and would probably have taken ample and fearful vengeance upon Frank, had not the mendicant and others prevented him.

"Have sinse," said Darby; "this is not the way to behave, man: lave the gun lyin' where she is, till we see more about us. Stand back there, an' let me look at these marks: ay, about five yards—there's the track of feet about five yards before him—here they turn about, an' go back. Here, Saviour o' the world! see here! the mark, clane an' clear, of the butt o' the gun! Now if that boy stretched afore us had the gun in *his* hand the time she went off, could the mark of it be *here?* Bring me down the gun—an' the curse o' God upon her for an unlucky thief, whoever had her! It's thrue!—it's too thrue!" he continued—"the man that had the gun stood on *this spot.*"

"It's a falsity," said Frank; "it's a damnable falsity. Rody Teague, I call upon you to spake for me. Didn't you see, when we went to the hills, that it was Mike carried the gun, an' not me?"

"I did," replied Rody; "I can swear to that."

"Ay," exclaimed Frank, with triumph, "an' you yourself, Darby, saw us, as I said, makin' up whatsomever little differences there was betwixt us."

"I did," replied the mendicant, sternly; "but I heard you say, no longer ago than last night—*why*—

why you *shwore* it, man alive!—that if *you* wouldn't have Peggy Gartland, *he* never should. In your own stable I heard it, an' I was the manes of disappointin' you an' your gang, when you thought to take away the girl by force. You're well known too often to carry a fair face when the heart under it is black wid you."

"All I can say is," observed young Reillaghan, "that if it comes out agin you that you played him foul, all the earth won't save your life; I'll have your heart's blood, if I should hang for it a thousand times."

This dialogue was frequently interrupted by the sobbings and clamour of the women, and the detached conversation of some of the men, who were communicating to each other their respective opinions upon the melancholy event which had happened.

Darby More now brought Reillaghan's father aside, and thus addressed him:

"*Gluntho!**—to tell God's thruth, I've sthrong suspicions that your son was murdhered. This sacred thing that I put the crass upon people's breasts wid, saves people from *hangin'* an' unnatural death. Frank spoke to me last night, no longer ago, to come up an' mark it an *him* to-morrow. My opinion is, that he intinded to murdher him at that time, an' wanted to have a protection agin what might happen to him in regard o' the black deed."

"Can we prove it agin him?" inquired the disconsolate father: "I know it'll be hard, as there was no one present but themselves; an' if he did it, surely he'll not confess it."

"We may make him do it, maybe," said the mendicant: "the villain's asily frightened, an' fond o' charms, an' *pishthrogues*,† an' sich holy things, for all his wickedness. Don't say a word. We'll take him by surprise; I'll call upon him to *touch the corpse*. Make them women—an' och, it's hard to ex-

* Listen!

† Superstitious spells and witcheries.

pect it—make them stop clappin' their hands, an' cryin'; an' let there be a dead silence, if you can."

During this and some other observations made by Darby, Frank got the gun in his possession; and, whilst seeming to be engaged in looking at it, and examining the lock, he actually contrived to reload it without having been observed.

"Now, neighbours," said Darby, "hould your tongues for a weeshy start, till I ax Frank M'Kenna a questin or two. Frank M'Kenna, as you hope to meet God at judgment, did you take his life that's lyin' a corpse before us?"

"I did *not*," replied M'Kenna; "I could clear myself on all the books in Europe, that he met his death as I tould yees; an' more nor that," he added, dropping upon his knees, and uncovering his head, "*may I die widout priest or prayer—widout help, hope, or happiness*, UPON THE SPOT WHERE HE'S NOW STRETCHED, *if I murdhered or shot him.*"

"I say amin to that," replied Darby: "*Oxis doxis glorioxis!*—So far, that's right, if the blood of him's not an you. But there's one thing more to be done: will you walk over, *under the eye of God*, AN' TOUCH THE CORPSE? Hould back, neighbours, an' let him come over alone: I an' Owen Reillaghan will stand here wid the lights, to see if the corpse bleeds."

"Give me, too, a light," said M'Kenna's father, "my son must get fair play, any way: *I* must be a witness myself to it, an' will, too."

"It's but rasonable," said Owen Reillaghan; "come over beside Darby an' myself: I'm willin' that your son should stand or fall by what'll happen."

Frank's father, with a taper in his hand, immediately went, with a pale face and trembling steps, to the place appointed for him beside the corpse, where he took his stand.

When young M'Kenna heard Darby's last question, he seemed as if seized by an inward spasm: the start which he gave, and his gaspings for breath, were visible to all present. Had he seen the spirit of the mur-

dered man before him, his horror could not have been greater; for this ceremony had been considered a most decisive test in cases of suspicion of murder—an ordeal, indeed, to which few murderers wished to submit themselves. In addition to this we may observe, that Darby's knowledge of the young man's character was correct: with all his crimes he was weak-minded and superstitious.

He stood silent for some time after the ordeal had been proposed to him; his hair became literally erect with the dread of this formidable scrutiny, his cheeks turned white, and the cold perspiration fell from him in large drops. All his strength appeared to have departed from him; he stood, as if hesitating, and even the energy necessary to stand seemed to be the result of an effort.

"Remember," said Darby, pulling out the large crucifix which was attached to his beads, "that the eye of God is upon you. If you've committed the murdher, thrimble; if not, Frank, you've little to fear in touchin' the corpse."

Frank had not yet uttered a word; but, leaning himself on the gun, he looked wildly around him, cast his eyes up to the stormy sky, then turned them with a dead glare upon the corpse and the crucifix.

"Do you confiss the murdher?" said Darby.

"Murdher!" rejoined Frank: "no; I confess *no* murdher: you villain, do you *want* to make me guilty? do you want to make me guilty, you deep villian?"

It seemed as if the current of his thoughts and feelings had taken a new direction, though it is probable that the excitement which appeared to be rising within him was only the courage of fear.

"You all wish to find me guilty," he added "but I'll show yees that I'm not guilty."

He immediately walked towards the corpse, and stooping down, touched the body with one hand, holding the gun in the other. The interest of that moment was intense, and all eyes were strained towards

the spot. Behind the corpse, at each shoulder—for the body lay against a small snow wreath, in a recumbent position—stood the father of the deceased and the father of the accused, each wound up by feelings of a directly opposite character to a pitch of dreadful excitement. Over them, in his fantastic dress and white beard, stood the tall mendicant, who held up his crucifix to Frank, with an awful menace upon his strongly marked countenance. At a little distance to the left of the body stood the other men who were assembled, having their torches held aloft in their hands, and their forms bent towards the corpse, their faces indicating expectation, dread, and horror. The female relations of the deceased stood nearest his remains, their torches extended in the same direction, their visages exhibiting the passions of despair and grief in their wildest characters, but as if arrested by some supernatural object immediately before their eyes, that produced a new and more awful feeling than grief. When the body was touched, Frank stood as if himself bound by a spell to the spot. At length he turned his eyes to the mendicant, who stood silent and motionless, with the crucifix still extended in his hand.

"Are you satisfied *now?*" said he.

"That's wanst," said the pilgrim: "you're to touch it three times."

Frank hesitated a moment, but immediately stooped again, and touched it twice in succession; but it remained still and unchanged as before. His father broke the silence by a fervent ejaculation of thanksgiving to God for the vindication of his son's character which he had just witnessed.

"Now!" exclaimed M'Kenna, in a loud exulting tone, "you all see that I did *not* murdher him!"

"You did!" said a voice, which was immediately recognized to be that of the deceased.

M'Kenna shrieked aloud, and immediately fled with his gun towards the mountains, pursued by Reillaghan's other son. The crowd rushed in towards the

body, whilst sorrow, affright, exultation, and wonder, marked the extraordinary scene which ensued.

"Queen o' heaven!" exclaimed old M'Kenna, "who would believe this only they hard it!"

"The murdher wouldn't lie!" shrieked out Mrs. Reillaghan—the murdher wouldn't lie!—the blood o' my darlin' son spoke it!—his blood spoke it; or God, or his angel, spoke it for him!"

"It's beyant anything ever known!" some exclaimed, "to come back, an' tell the deed upon his murdherer! God presarve us, an' save us, this night! I wish we wor at home out o' this wild place!"

Others said they had heard such things; but this having happened before their own eyes, surpassed anything that could be conceived.

The mendicant now advanced, and once more mysteriously held up his crucifix.

"Keep silence!" said he, in a solemn, sonorous voice: "Keep silence, I say, and kneel down all o' yees before what I've in my hand. If you want to know who or what the voice came from, I can tell yees: IT WAS THE CRUCIFIX THAT SPOKE!!"

This communication was received with a feeling of devotion too deep for words. His injunction was instantly complied with: they knelt, and bent down in worship before it in the mountain wilds.

"Ay," said he, "little yees know the virtues of that crucifix! It was consecrated by a friar so holy that it was well known there was but the shadow of him upon the earth, the other part of him bein' night an' day in heaven among the archangels. It shows the power of this Crass, any way; an' you may tell your friends that I'll sell badges touched wid it to the faithful at sixpence a-piece. They can be put an your *padareens* as Dicades, wid a blessin'. Oxis doxis glorioxis—Amin! Let us now bear the corpse home, until it's dressed an' laid out dacently as it ought to be."

The body was then placed on an easy litter, formed of great coats buttoned together, and supported by the

strongest men present, who held it one or two at each corner. In this manner they advanced at a slow pace, until they reached Owen Reillaghan's house, where they found several of the country people assembled, waiting for their return.

It was not until the body had been placed in an inner room, where none were admitted until it should be laid out, that the members of the family first noticed the prolonged absence of Reillaghan's other son. The moment it had been alluded to, they were seized with new alarm and consternation.

"*Hanim an diouol!*" said Reillaghan, bitterly, in Irish, "but I doubt the red-handed villain has cut short the lives of my *two* brave sons. I only hope he may stop in the counthry: I'm not widout frinds an' followers that 'ud think it no sin in a just cause to pay him in his own coin, an' to take from him an' his a pound o' blood for every ounce of ours they shed."

A number of his friends instantly volunteered to retrace their way to the mountains, and search for the other son. "There's little danger of his life," said a relation: "it's a short time Frank 'ud stand him, particularly as the gun wasn't charged. We'll go, at any rate, for fraid he might lose himself in the mountains, or walk into some o' the lochs on his way home. We had as good bring some whisky wid us, for he may want it badly."

While they had been speaking, however, the snow began to fall, and the wind to blow in a manner that promised a heavy and violent storm. They proceeded, notwithstanding, on their search, and on whistling for the dog, discovered that he was not to be found.

"He went wid us to the mountains, I know," said the former speaker; "an' I think it likely he'll be found wid Owen, wherever he is. Come boys, step out: it's a dismal night, any way, the Lord knows—och, och!" And with sorrowful but vigorous steps they went in quest of the missing brother.

Nothing but the preternatural character of the words which were so mysteriously pronounced immediately

before Owen's pursuit of M'Kenna, could have prevented that circumstance, together with the flight of the latter, from exciting greater attention among the crowd. His absence, however, now that they had time to reflect on it, produced unusual alarm, not only on account of M'Kenna's bad character, but from the apprehension of Owen being lost in the mountains.

The inextinguishable determination of revenge with which an Irishman pursues any person who, either directly or indirectly, takes the life of a near relation, or invades the peace of his domestic affections, was strongly illustrated by the nature of Owen's pursuit after M'Kenna, considering the appalling circumstances under which he undertook it. It is certainly more than probable that M'Kenna, instead of flying, would have defended himself with the loaded gun, had not his superstitious fears been excited by the words which so mysteriously charged him with the murder. The direction he accidentally took led both himself and his pursuer into the wildest recesses of the mountains. The chase was close and desperate, and certainly might have been fatal to Reillaghan, had M'Kenna thought of using the gun. His terror, however, exhausted him, and overcame his presence of mind to such a degree, that so far from using the weapon in his defence, he threw it aside, in order to gain ground upon his pursuer. This he did but slowly, and the pursuit was as yet uncertain. At length Owen found the distance between himself and his brother's murderer increasing; the night was dark, and he himself feeble and breathless: he therefore gave over all hope of securing him, and returned to follow those who had accompanied him to the spot where his brother's body lay. It was when retracing his path that the nature of his situation occurred to him: the snow had not begun to fall, but the appearance of the sky was strongly calculated to depress him.

Every person knows with what remarkable suddenness snow storms descend. He had scarcely advanced homewards more than twenty minutes, when the grey

tempest spread its dusky wings over the heavens, and a darker shade rapidly settled upon the white hills—now becoming indistinct in the gloom of the air, which was all in commotion, and groaned aloud with the noise of the advancing storm. When he saw the deep gloom, and felt the chilling coldness pierce his flesh so bitterly, he turned himself in the direction which led by the shortest possible cut towards his father's house. He was at this time nearly three miles from any human habitation; and as he looked into the darkness, his heart began to palpitate with an alarm almost bordering on hopelessness. His dog, which had, up till this boding change, gone on before him, now partook in his master's apprehensions, and trotted anxiously at his feet.

In the mean time the winds howled in a melancholy manner along the mountains, and carried with them from the upper clouds the rapidly descending sleet. The storm-current, too, was against him, and as the air began to work in dark confusion, he felt for the first time how utterly helpless a thing he was under the fierce tempest in this dreadful solitude.

At length the rushing sound which he first heard in the distance approached him in all its terrors; and in a short time he was staggering, like a drunken man, under the incessant drifts which swept over him and about him. Nothing could exceed the horrors of the atmosphere at this moment. From the surface of the earth the whirlwinds swept immense clouds that rose up instantaneously, and shot off along the brows and ravines of the solitary wild, sometimes descending into the valleys, and again rushing up the almost perpendicular sides of the mountains, with a speed, strength, and noise, that mocked at everything possessing life; whilst in the air the tumult and the darkness continued to deepen in the most awful manner. The winds seemed to meet from every point of the compass, and the falling drifts flew backward and forwards in every direction; the cold became intense, and Owen's efforts to advance homewards were beginning to fail. He was driven about like an autumn leaf, and his dog, which

kept close to him, had nearly equal difficulty in proceeding. No sound but that of the tempest could now be heard, except the screaming of the birds as they were tossed on sidewing through the commotion which prevailed.

In this manner was Owen whirled about, till he lost all knowledge of his local situation, being ignorant whether he advanced towards home or otherwise. His mouth and eyes were almost filled with driving sleet; sometimes a cloud of light sandlike drift would almost bury him, as it crossed, or followed, or opposed his path; sometimes he would sink to the middle in a snow-wreath, from which he extricated himself with great difficulty; and among the many terrors by which he was beset, that of walking into a lake, or over a precipice, was not the least paralyzing. Owen was a young man of great personal strength and activity, for the possession of which, next to his brother, he had been distinguished among his companions; but he now became totally exhausted; the chase after M'Kenna, his former exertion, his struggles, his repeated falls, his powerful attempts to get into the vicinity of life, the desperate strength he put forth in breaking through the vortex of the whirlwind, all had left him faint, and completely at the mercy of the elements.

The cold sleet scales were now frozen to ice on his cheeks; his clothes were completely incrusted with the hard snow, which had been beaten into them by the strength of the blast, and his joints were getting stiff and benumbed. The tumult of the tempest, the whirling of the snow-clouds, and the thick snow, now falling, and again tossed upwards by sudden gusts to the clouds, deprived him of all power of reflection, and rendered him, though not altogether blind or deaf, yet incapable of forming any distinct opinion upon what he saw or heard. Still, actuated by the unconscious principle of self-preservation, he tottered on; cold, feeble, and breathless, now driven back like a reed by the strong rush of the storm, or prostrated al-

most to suffocation under the whirlwinds, that started up like savage creatures of life about him.

During all this time his faithful dog never abandoned him; but his wild howlings only heightened the horrors of his situation. When he fell, the affectionate creature would catch the flap of his coat, or his arm, in his teeth, and attempt to raise him; and as long as his master had presence of mind, with the unerring certainty of instinct, he would turn him, when taking a wrong direction, into that which led homewards.

Owen was not, however, reduced to this state without experiencing sensations of which no language could convey adequate notions. At first he struggled heroically with the storm; but when utter darkness threw its impervious shades over the desolation around him, and the fury of the elements grew so tremendous, all the strong propensities to life became roused, the convulsive throes of a young heart on the steep of death threw a wild and corresponding energy into his vigorous frame, and occasioned him to cling to existence with a tenacity rendered still stronger by the terrible consciousness of his unprepared state, and the horror of being plunged into eternity, unsupported by the rites of his church, whilst the crime of attempting to take away human life lay on his soul. Those domestic affections, too, which in Irishmen are so strong, became excited; his home, his fireside, the faces of his kindred; already impressed with affliction for the death of one brother, and the mild countenance of the fair girl to whom he was about to be united, were conjured up in the powerful imagery of natural feeling, the fountains of which were opened in his heart, and his agonizing cry for life rose wildly from the mountain desert upon the voice of the tempest. Then, indeed, when the gulf of a two-fold death yawned before him, did the struggling spirit send up its shrieking prayer to heaven with desperate impulse. These struggles, however, as well as those of the body, became gradually weaker as the storm tossed him about, and with the chill of its breath withered him into total

helplessness. He reeled on, stiff and insensible, without knowing whither he went, falling with every blast, and possessing scarcely any faculty of life except mere animation.

After about an hour, however, the storm subsided, and the clouds broke away into light fleecy columns before the wind; the air, too, became less cold, and the face of nature more visible. The driving sleet and hard granular snow now ceased to fall; but were succeeded by large feathery flakes, that descended slowly upon the still air.

Had this trying scene lasted much longer, Owen must soon have been a stiffened corse. The child-like strength, however, which just enabled him to bear up without sinking in despair to die, now supported him when there was less demanded for energy. The dog, too, by rubbing itself against him, and licking his face, enabled him, by a last effort, to recollect himself, so as to have a glimmering perception of his situation. His confidence returned, and with it a greater degree of strength. He shook, as well as he could, the snow from his clothes, where it had accumulated heavily, and felt himself able to proceed, slowly it is true, towards his father's house, which he had nearly reached when he met his friends, who were once more hurrying out to the mountains in quest of him, having been compelled to return, in consequence of the storm, when they had first set out. The whisky, their companionship, and their assistance soon revived him. One or two were despatched home before them, to apprize the afflicted family of his safety; and the intelligence was hailed with melancholy joy by the Reillaghans. A faint light played for a moment over the gloom which had settled among them, but it was brief; for on ascertaining the safety of their second son, their grief rushed back with renewed violence, and nothing could be heard but the voice of sorrow and affliction.

Darby More, who had assumed the control of the family, did everything in his power to console them;

his efforts, however, were viewed with a feeling little short of indignation.

"Darby," said the afflicted mother, "you have, undher God, in some sinse, my fair son's death to account for. You had a dhrame, but you wouldn't tell it to us. If you had, my boy might be livin' this day, for it would be asy for him to be an his guard."

"Musha, poor woman," replied Darby, "sure you don't know, you afflicted crathur, what you're spakin' about. Tell my dhrame! Why, thin, it's myself towld it to him, from beginning to ind, and that whin we wor goin' to mass this day itself. I desired him, on the paril of his life, not to go out a thracin', or toards the mountains, good or bad."

"You said you had a prayer that 'ud keep it back," observed the mother, "an' why didn't you say it?"

"I did say it," replied Darby, "an' that afore a bit crassed my throath this mornin'; but, you see he broke his promise of not goin' to the mountains, an' *that* was what made the dhrame come trhue."

"Well, well, Darby, I beg your pardon, an' God's pardon, for judgin' you in the wrong. Oh, wurraw sthrue! my brave son, is it there you're lyin' wid us, avourneen machree!" and she again renewed her grief.

"Oh, thin, I'm sure I forgive you," said Darby; "but keep your grief in for a start, till I says the *De prowhinjis* over him, for the pace and repose of his sowl. Kneel down all of yees."

He repeated his prayer in language which it would require one of Edward Irving's adepts in the unknown tongues to interpret. When he had recited about the half of it, Owen, and those who had gone to seek him, entered the house, and, after the example of the others, reverently knelt down until he finished it.

Owen's appearance once more renewed their grief. The body of his brother had been removed to a bed, beyond the fire in the kitchen; and when Owen looked upon the features of his beloved companion, he approached, and stooped down to kiss his lips. He was

still too feeble, however, to bend by his own strength; and it is also probable that the warm air of the house relaxed him. Be this, however, as it may, he fell forward, but supported himself by his hands, which were placed upon the body; a deep groan was heard, and the apparently dead man opened his eyes, and feebly exclaimed—"a dhrink! a dhrink!"

Darby More had, on concluding the *De profundis*, seated himself beside the bed on which Mike lay; but on hearing the groan, and the call for drink, he leaped rapidly to his legs, and exclaimed, "My sowl to hell, an' the divil, Owen Reillaghan, but your son's alive!! Off wid two or three of yees, as hard as the divil can dhrive yees, for the priest an' docthor!! Off wid yees! ye damned lazy spalpeens, aren't ye near there by this! Give us my cant! Are yees gone? Oh, by this an' by that—hell—eh—aren't yees gone?" but ere he could finish the sentence they had set out.

"Now," he exclaimed, in a voice whose tremendous tones were strongly at variance with his own injunctions—"Now, neighbours, d——n yees, keep silence. Mrs. Reillaghan, get a bottle of whisky an' a mug o' wather. Make haste. *Hanim an Diouol!* don't be all night!"

The poor mother, however, could not stir; the unexpected revulsion of feeling which she had so suddenly experienced was more than she could sustain. A long fainting fit was the consequence, and Darby's commands were obeyed by the wife of a friendly neighbour.

The mendicant immediately wetted Mike's lips, and poured some spirits, copiously diluted with water, down his throat; after which he held the whisky bottle, like a connoisseur, between himself and the light. "I hope," said he, "this whisky is the ra-al crathur." He put the bottle to his mouth as he spoke, and on holding it a second time before his eye, he shook his head complacently—"Ay," said he, "if anything could bring the dead back to this world, my sowl to glory, but *that* would. Oh, thin, it would give the

dead life, sure enough!" He put it once more to his lips, from which it was not separated without relinquishing a considerable portion of its contents.

"*Dhea Grasthias!*" he exclaimed; "throth, I find myself the better o' that sup, in regard that it's good for this touch o' configuration that I'm throubled wid inwardly! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis! Amin!" These words he spoke in a low, placid voice, lest the wounded man might be discomposed by his observations.

The rapidity with which the account of Mike's restoration to life spread among the neighbours was surprising. Those who had gone for the priest and doctor communicated it to all they met, and these again to others: so that in a short time the house was surrounded by great numbers of their acquaintances, all anxious to hear the particulars more minutely. Darby, who never omitted an opportunity of impressing the people with a belief in his own sanctity, and in that of his Crucifix, came out among them, and answered their inquiries by a solemn shake of his head, and a mysterious indication of his finger to the Crucifix, but said nothing more. This was enough. The murmur of reverenee and wonder spread among them, and ere long there were few present who did not believe that Reillaghan had been restored to life by a touch of Darby's crucifix; an opinion which is not wholly exploded until this day.

Peggy Gartland, who, fortunately, had not heard the report of her lover's death until it was contradicted by the account of his revival, now entered, and by her pale countenance betrayed strong symptoms of affection and sympathy. She sat by his side, gazing mournfully on his features, and with difficulty suppressed her tears.

For some time before her arrival, the mother and sisters of Mike had been removed to another room, lest the tumultuous expression of their mingled joy and sorrow might disturb him. The fair artless girl, although satisfied that he still lived, entertained no hopes of his recovery; but she ventured, in a low, trembling

voice, to inquire from Darby some particulars of the melancholy transaction which was likely to deprive her of her betrothed husband.

"Where did the shot sthrike him, Darby?"

"Clane through the body, a villish; jist where Captain Cramer was shot at the battle o' Bunker's Hill, where he lay as good as dead for twelve hours, an' was near bein' berrid a *corp*, an' him alive all the time, only that as they were pullin' him off o' the cart, he gev a shout, an' thin, *a colleen dhas*, they began to think he might be livin' still. Sure enough, he was, too, an' lived successfully, till he died wid dhrinkin' brandy, as a cure for the gout; the Lord be praised!"

"Where's the villain, Darby?"

"He's in the mountains, no doubt, where he had thim to fight wid that's a match for him—God, an' the dark storm that fell a while agone. *They'll* pay him, never fear, for his thrachery to the noble boy that chastised him for your sake, *a cushla oge!* Sthrong was your hand, a Veehal, an' ginerous was your affectionate heart; an' well you loved the fair girl that's sittin' beside you! Throth, Peggy, my heart's black wid sarrow about the darlin' young man. Still life's in him; an' while there's life there's hope; glory be to God!"

The eulogium of the pilgrim, who was, in truth, much attached to Mike, moved the heart of the affectionate girl, whose love and sympathy were pure as the dew on the grass-blade, and now as easily affected by the slightest touch. She remained silent for a time, but secretly glided her hand towards that of her lover, which she clasped in hers, and by a gentle and timid pressure, strove to intimate to him that she was beside him. Long, but unavailing, was the struggle to repress her sorrow: her bosom heaved; she gave two or three loud sobs, and burst into tears and lamentations.

"Don't cry, avourneen," whispered Darby—"don't cry; I'll warrant you, that Darby More will ate share of your weddin' dinner an' his, yit. There's a small

taste of colour comin' to his face, which, I think, undher God, is owin' to my touchin' him wid the Cruciwhix. Don't cry, a colleen, he'll get over it, an' more than it, yit, a colleen bawn!"

Darby then hurried her into the room where Mike's mothers and sisters were. On entering she threw herself into the arms of the former, laid her face on her bosom, and wept bitterly. This renewed the mother's grief: she clasped the interesting girl in a sorrowful embrace; so did his sisters. They threw themselves into each other's arms, and poured forth those touching, but wild bursts of pathetic language, which are never heard but when the heart is struck by some desolating calamity.

"Husht!" said a neighbouring man who was present; "husht! it's a shame for yees, an' the boy not dead yit."

"I'm not ashamed," said Peggy: "why should I be ashamed of bein' sarry for the likes of Mike Reillaghan? Where was his aquil? Wasn't all hearts upon him? Didn't the very poor on the road bless him whin he passed? Who ever had a bad word agin him, but the villain that murdhered him? Murdhered him! Heaven above me! an' why? For *my* sake! For my sake the pride o' the parish is laid low! Ashamed! Is it for cryin' for my betrothed husband, that was sworn to me, an' I to him, before the eye of God above us? This day week I was to be his bride; an' now—now—Oh, Vread Reillaghan, take me to you! Let me go to his mother! My heart's broke, Vread Reillaghan! Let me go to her: nobody's grief for him is like ours. You're his mother, an' I'm his wife in the sight o' God. Proud was I out of him: my eyes brightened when they seen him, an' my heart got light when I heard his voice; an' now what's afore me?—what's afore me but sorrowful days an' a broken heart!"

Mrs. Reillaghan placed her tenderly and affectionately beside her, on the bed whereon she herself sat. With the corner of her handkerchief she wiped the tears from the weeping girl, although her own flowed

fast. Her daughters, also, gathered about her, and, in language of the most endearing kind, endeavoured to soothe and console her.

"He may live yet, Peggy, avourneen," said his mother: "my brave and noble son may live yet, an' you may both be happy. Don't be cryin' so much, *asthore galh machree;** sure he's in the hands o' God, avourneen; an' your young heart won't be broke I hope. Och, the Lord pity her young feelins!" exclaimed the mother, affected even by the consolation she offered to the betrothed bride of her son: "is it any wondher she'd sink under sich a blow! for, sure enough, where was the likes of him? No, asthore; it's no wondher—it's no wondher! Lonesome will your heart be widout him; for I know what he'd feel if a hair of *your* head was injured."

"Oh, I know it—I know it! There was music in his voice, an' *grah** and kindness to every crathur an God's earth; but to me—to me—oh, no one knew his love to me, but myself an' God. Oh, if I was dead, that I couldn't feel this, or if my life could save his! Why did'nt the villain—the black villain, wid God's curse upon him—why didn't he shoot *me*, thin I could never be Mike's wife, an' his hand of murdher might be satisfied? If he had, I would'nt feel as I do. Ay; the warmest, an' the best, an' the dearest blood of my heart I could shed for him. That heart was his, an' he had a right to it. Our love wasn't of yistherday: afore the links of my hair came to my showlders I loved him, an' thought o' him; an' many a time he tould me I was his first! God knows he was my first, an' he will be my last, let him live or die."

"Well, but, Peggy achora," said his sister, "maybe it's sinful to be cryin' this way, an' he not dead."

"God forgive me, if it's a sin," replied Peggy; "I'd not wish to do anything sinful and displasin' to God; an' I'll sthrive to keep down my grief: I will, as well as I can."

* The beloved white (girl) of my heart. † Affection.

She put her hands on her face, and by an effort of firmness, subdued the tone of her grief to a low continuous murmur of sorrow.

"An' along wid that," said the sister, "maybe the noise is disturbin' him. Darby put us all out o' the kitchen, to have pace an' quietness about him."

"An' 'twas well thought o' Darby," she replied, "an may the blessin' o' God rest upon him for it! A male's mate, or a night's lodgin' he'll never want undher my father's roof for that goodness to *him*. I'll be quiet thin."

There was now a short pause, during which those in the room heard a smack, accompanied by the words, "*Dheah Grashthias!* Throth, I'm the bether o' that sup, so I am. Nothin' keeps this thief of a configuration down but it. *Dheah Grashthias* for that! Oh, thin this *is* the stuff! It warms a body to the tops o' the nails!"

"Don't spare it, Darby," said old Reillaghan, "if it does you good."

"Avourneen," said Darby, "it's only what gives me a little relief I ever take it, *jist by way of cure*, for it's the only thing does me good, when I am this-a-way."

Several persons in the neighbourhood were, in the mean time, flocking to Reillaghan's house. A worthy man, accompanied by his wife, entered as the pilgrim had concluded. The woman, in accordance with the custom of the country, raised the Irish cry, in a loud melancholy wail, that might be heard at a great distance.

Darby, who prided himself on maintaining silence, could not preserve the consistency of his character upon this occasion, any more than on that of Mike's recent symptoms of life.

"Your sowl to the divil, you fagot!" he exclaimed, "what do you mane? The divil whip the tongue out of you, are you goin' to come here only to disturb the boy that's not dead yet. Get out o' this, or be asy wid your skhreechin', or by the crass that

died for us, only you're a woman, I'd tumble you wid a lick o' my cant. Keep asy, you vagrant, an' the dacent boy not dead yet. Hell bellows you, what do you mane?"

"Not dead!" exclaimed the woman, with her body bent in the proper attitude, her hands extended, and the crying face turned with amazement to Darby. "Not dead! Wurrah, man alive, isn't he murdhered?"

"Hell resave the matther for that!" replied Darby. "I tell you, he's livin', an' will live, I hope, barrin' your skirlin' dhrives the life that's in him out of him. Go into the room there to the women, an' make yourself scarce out o' this, or by the padareens about me, I'll malivogue you."

"We can't be angry wid the dacent woman," observed old Reillaghan, "in regard that she came to show her friendship and respect."

"I'd be angry wid St. Pether," said Darby, "an' 'ud not scruple to give him a lick o' my c—— Lord presarve us! what was I goin' to say! Why, throth, I believe the little wits I had are all gone a shaughran! I must fast a Friday or two for the same words agin St. Pether. Oxis doxis glorioxis—Amin."

Hope is strong in love and in life. Peggy, now that grief had eased her heart of its load of accumulated sorrow, began to reflect upon Darby's anecdote of Captain Cramer, which she related to those about her. They all rejoiced to hear that it was possible to be wounded so severely and live. They also consoled and supported each other, and expressed their trust that Mike might also recover. The opinion of the doctor was waited for with such anxiety as a felon feels when the foreman of the jury hands down the verdict which consigns him to life or death.

Whether Darby's prescription was the result of chance or sagacity we know not. We are bound, however, to declare that Reillaghan's strength was in some degree restored, although the pain he suffered amounted to torture. The surgeon (who was also a

physician, and, moreover, supplied his own medicines) and the priest, as they lived in the same town, both arrived together. The latter administered the rights of his church to him ; and the former, who was a skilful man, left nothing undone to accomplish his restoration to health. He had been shot through the body with a *bullet*—a circumstance which was not known until the arrival of the surgeon. This gentleman expressed much astonishment at his surviving the wound, but said that circumstances of a similar nature had occurred, particularly on the field of battle, although he admitted that they were few.

Darby, however, who resolved to have something like a decided opinion from him, without at all considering whether such a thing was possible, pressed him strongly upon the point.

"Arrah, blur-an-ager, Docthor Swither, say one thing or other. Is he to live or die? Plain talk Docthor, is all we want, an' no *feasthalagh.*"*

"The bullet, I am inclined to think," replied the Doctor, "must either not have touched a vital part, or touched it only slightly. I have known cases similar, it is true; but it is impossible for me to pronounce a decisive opinion upon him just now."

"The divil resave the yarrib† ever I'll gather for you agin, so long as my name's Darby More, except you say either 'life' or 'death,'" said Darby, who forgot his character of sanctity altogether.

"Darby, achora," said Mrs. Reillaghan, "don't crass the gintleman, an' him sthrivin' to do his best. Here, Paddy Gormly, bring some wather till the docthor washes his hands."

"Darby," replied the Doctor, to whom he was well known, "you are a good herbalist, but even although you should not serve me as usual in that capacity, yet I cannot say exactly either life or death. The case is too critical a one; but I do not despair, Darby, if that will satisfy you."

* Nonsense. † Herb.

"More power to you, Docthor, achora. Hell-an-age, where's that bottle? bring it here. Thank you, Vread. Docthor, here' wishin' you all happiness, an' may you set Mike on his legs wanst more! See, Docthor—see, man alive—look at this purty girl here, wid her wet cheeks; give her some hope, ahagur, if you can; keep the crathur's spirits up, an' I'll furnish you wid every yarrib in Europe, from the nettle to the rose."

"Don't despair, my good girl," said the Doctor, addressing Peggy, "I hope, I trust, that he may recover, but he must be kept easy and quiet."

"May the blessing of God, Sir, light down on you for the same words," replied Peggy, in a voice tremulous with gratitude and joy.

"Are you done wid him, Docthor?" said old Reillaghan.

"At present," replied the Doctor, "I can do nothing more for him; but I shall see him early to-morrow morning."

"Bekase, Sir," continued the worthy man, "here's Darby More, who's afflicted wid a conflamboration, or some sich thing, inwardly, an' if you could ase him, Sir, I'd pay the damages, whatever they might be."

The Doctor smiled slightly. "Darby's complaint," said he, "is beyond my practice; there is but one cure for it, and that is, if I have any skill, a little of what's in the bottle here, taken, as our prescriptions sometimes say, 'when the patient is inclined for it.'"

"By my sou—sanctity, Docthor," said Darby, "you're a man o' skill, any how, an' that's well known, Sir. Nothin', as Father Hoolaghan says, but the sup o' whisky does this sarra of a configuration good. It rises the wind off o' my stomach, Docthor!"

"It does, Darby, it does. Now let all be peace and quietness," continued the Doctor: "take away a great part of this fire, and don't attempt to remove him to any other bed until I desire you. I shall call again tomorrow morning early."

The doctor's attention to his patient was unremitting; everything that human skill, joined to long expe-

rience and natural talent, could do to restore the young man to his family, was done; and in the course of a few weeks the friends of Reillaghan had the satisfaction of seeing him completely out of danger.

Mike declared after his recovery, that though incapable of motion on the mountains, he was not altogether insensible to what passed around him. The loud tones of their conversation he could hear. The oath which young M'Kenna uttered in a voice so wild and exalted, fell clearly on his ear, and he endeavoured to contradict it, in order that he might be secured and punished in the event of his death. He also said, that the pain he suffered in the act of being conveyed home, occasioned him to groan feebly; but that the sobs, and cries, and loud conversation of those who surrounded him, prevented his moans from being heard. It is probable, after all, that were it not for the accidental fall of Owen upon his body, he might not have survived the wound, inasmuch as the medical skill, which contributed to restore him, would not have been called in.

Though old Frank M'Kenna and his family felt an oppressive load of misery taken off their hearts by the prospect of Reillaghan's recovery, yet it was impossible for them to be insensible to the fate of their son, knowing as they did, that he must have been out among the mountains during the storm. His unhappy mother and Rody sat up the whole night, expecting his return, but morning arrived without bringing him home. For six days afterwards the search for him was general and strict; his friends and neighbours traversed the mountain wastes until they left scarcely an acre of them unexplored. On the sixth day there came a thaw, and towards the close of the seventh, he was found a "stiffened corpse," *upon the very spot* where he had shot his rival, and on which he had challenged the Almighty to stretch him in death, without priest or prayer, if he were guilty of the crime with which he had been charged. He was found lying with a circle drawn round him, his head pillowed upon the innocent blood which he had shed with the intention

of murder, and a bloody cross marked upon his breast and forehead. It was thought that in the dread of approaching death he had formed it with his hand, which came accidentally in contact with the blood that lay in clots about him.

The manner of his death excited a profound and wholesome feeling among the people, with respect to the crime which he attempted to commit. The circumstances attending it, and his oath upon the spot where he shot Reillaghan, are still spoken of by the fathers of the neighbouring villages, and even by some who were present at the search for his body. It was also doubly remarkable on account of a case of spectral illusion which it produced, and which was ascribed to the effect of M'Kenna's supernatural appearance at the time. The daughter of a herdsman in the mountains was strongly affected by the spectacle of his dead body borne past her father's door. In about a fortnight afterwards, she assured her family that he appeared to her. She saw the apparition, in the beginning, only at night; but ere long it ventured, as she imagined, to appear in day-light. Many imaginary conversations took place between them; and the fact of the peasantry flocking to the herd's house, to satisfy themselves as to the truth of the rumour, is yet well remembered in the parish. It was also affirmed, that as the funeral of M'Kenna passed to the churchyard, a hare crossed it, which some one present struck on the side with a stone. The hare, says the tradition, was not injured, but the sound of the stroke resembled that produced on striking an empty barrel.

We have nearly wound up our story, in which we have feebly endeavoured to illustrate scenes that were, some time ago, not unusual in Irish life. There is little more to be added, except that Mike Reillaghan almost miraculously recovered; that he and Peggy Gartland were happily married, and that Darby More lost his character as a dreamer in that part of the parish. Mike, with whom, however, he still continued a favourite, used frequently to allude to the *speaking*

crucifix, the dream aforesaid, and his bit of fiction, in assuring his mother that he had dissuaded him against "tracing" on that eventful day.

"Well, avourneen," Darby would exclaim, "the holiest of us has our failins; but, in throth, the thruth of it is, that myself didn't know what I was sayin', I was so *through other;** for I remimber that I was badly afflicted wid this thief of a configuration inwardly at the time. That, you see, an' your own throubles, put my mind *ashaughran* for a start. But, upon my sanctity,—an' sure that's a great oath wid *me*—only for the holy carol you bought from me the night before, an', above all, touchin' you wid the blessed crucifix, you'd never a' got over the same accident. Oh, you may smile an' shake your head, but it's thruth whether or not! Glory be to God!"

The priest of the parish, on ascertaining correctly the incidents mentioned in this sketch, determined to deprive the people of at least one pretext for their licentiousness. He represented the abuses connected with such a ceremony to the bishop; and from that night to the present time, the inhabitants of Kilnaheery never had, in their own parish, an opportunity of hearing a Midnight Mass.

* Agitated.

THE LIANHAN SHEE,

AN IRISH SUPERSTITION.

One summer evening Mary Sullivan was sitting at her own well-swept hearth-stone, knitting feet to a pair of sheep's-gray stockings, for Bartley, her husband. It was one of those serene evenings in the month of June, when the decline of day assumes a calmness and repose, resembling what we might suppose to have irradiated Eden, when our first parents sat in it before their fall. The beams of the sun shone through the windows in clear shafts of amber light, exhibiting millions of those atoms which float to the naked eye within its mild radiance. The dog lay barking in his dream at her feet, and the grey cat sat purring placidly upon his back, from which even his occasional agitation did not dislodge her.

Mrs. Sullivan was the wife of a wealthy farmer, and niece to the Rev. Felix O'Rourke; her kitchen was consequently large, comfortable, and warm. Over where she sat, jutted out the "brace" well lined with bacon; to the right hung a well-scoured salt box, and to the left was the jamb, with its little gothic paneless window to admit the light. Within it hung several ash rungs, seasoning for flail-sooples, a dozen of eel-skins, and several stripes of horse-skin, as hangings for them. The dresser was a "parfit white," and well furnished with the usual appurtenances. Over the door and on the "threshel," were nailed, "for luck," two horse-shoes that had been found by acci-

[illegible] "hole" in the wall, beneath the salt-[illegible] bottle of holy water to keep the place [illegible] against the cope-stone of the gable, on [illegible] grew a large lump of house-leek, as a spe-[illegible] or sore eyes.

[illegible] the corner of the garden were a few stalks of [illegible], "to kill the thievin' worms in the childhre, the [illegible]," together with a little Rosenoble, Solomon's Seal, and Bugloss, each for some medicinal purpose. The "lime-wather," Mrs. Sullivan could make herself, and the "bog bane," for the *linh roe,* or heart-burn, grew in their own meadow-drain; so that, in fact, she had within her reach a very decent pharmacopeia, perhaps as harmless as that of the profession itself. Lying on the top of the salt-box was a bunch of fairy flax, and, sewed in the folds of her own scapular, was the dust of what had once been a four-leafed shamrock, an invaluable specific "for seein' the good people," if they happened to come within the bounds of vision. Over the door in the inside, over the beds, and over the cattle in the out-houses, were placed branches of withered palm, that had been consecrated by the priest on Palm Sunday; and when the cows happened to calve, this good woman tied, with her own hands, a woollen thread about their tails, to prevent them from being overlooked by evil eyes, or elf-shot by the fairies, who seem to possess a peculiar power over females of every species during the season of parturition. It is unnecessary to mention the variety of charms which she possessed for that obsolete malady the colic, for tooth-aches, head-aches, or for removing warts, and taking motes out of the eyes; let it suffice to inform our readers that she was well stocked with them; and that in addition to this, she, together with her husband, drank a potion made up and administered by an herb-doctor, for preventing for ever the slightest misunderstanding or quarrel between man and wife. Whether it produced this desirable object or not our readers may conjecture, when we add, that the herb-doctor, after having taken a very

liberal advantage of their generosity, was immediately compelled to disappear from the neighbourhood, in order to avoid meeting with Bartley, who had a sharp look out for him, not exactly on his own account, but "in regard," he said, "that it had no effect upon *Mary*, at all at all;" whilst Mary, on the other hand, admitted its efficacy upon herself, but maintained, "that *Bartley* was worse nor ever afther it."

Such was Mary Sullivan, as she sat at her own hearth, quite alone, engaged as we have represented her. What she may have been meditating on we cannot pretend to ascertain; but, after some time, she looked sharply into the "backstone," or hob, with an air of anxiety and alarm. By and by she suspended her knitting, and listened with much earnestness, leaning her right ear over to the hob, from whence the sounds, to which she paid such deep attention, proceeded. At length she crossed herself devoutly, and exclaimed, "Queen of saints about us!—is it back yees are? Well sure there's no use in talkin', bekase they say you know what's said of you, or to you—an' we may as well spake yees fair. Hem—musha yees are welcome back, crickets, avourneen! I hope that, not like the last visit ye ped us, yees are comin' for luck now! Moolyeen* died, any way, soon afther your other *kailyee*,† ye crathurs ye. Here's the bread, an' the salt, an' the male for yees, an' we wish yees well. Eh?—saints above, if it isn't listenin' they are, jist like a Christhen! Wurrah, but yees are the wise an' the quare crathurs all out."

She then shook a little holy water over the hob, and muttered to herself an Irish charm or prayer against the evils which crickets are often supposed by the peasantry to bring with them, and requested, still in the words of the charm, that their presence might, on that occasion, rather be a presage of good fortune to man and beast belonging to her.

"There now, ye *dhonhans* ye, sure ye can't say

* A cow without horns. † Short visit.

that ye're ill thrated here, anyhow, or ever was mocked or made game of in the same family. You have got your hansel, an' full an' plenty of it; hopin' at the same time that you'll have no rason in life to cut our best clothes from rivinge. Sure an' I didn't desarve to have my brave stuff *long body* cut an' riddled the way it was, the last time yees wor here, an' only bekase little Barny, that has but the sinse of a *gorsoon*, tould yees in a joke to pack off wid yourselves somewhere else. Musha, never heed what the likes of him says; sure he's but a *caudy*,* that doesn't mane ill, only the bit o' divarsion wid yees."

She then resumed her knitting, occasionally stopping, as she changed her needles, to listen, with her ear set, as if she wished to augur from the nature of their chirping, whether they came for good or evil. This, however, seemed to be beyond her faculty of translating their language; for after sagely shaking her head two or three times, she knit more busily than before.

At this moment, the shadow of a person passing the house darkened the window opposite which she sat, and immediately a tall female, of a wild dress and aspect, entered the kitchen.

"*Gho manhy dhea ghud, a ban chohr!* the blessin' o' Goodness upon you, dacent woman," said Mrs. Sullivan, addressing her in those kindly phrases so peculiar to the Irish language.

Instead of making her any reply, however, the woman, whose eye glistened with a wild depth of meaning, exclaimed in low tones, apparently of much anguish, "*Husht, husht, dherum!* husht, husht, I say —let me alone—I will do it—will you husht? I will, I say—I will—there now—that's it—be quiet, an' I will do it—be quiet!" and as she thus spoke, she turned her face back over her left shoulder, as if some invisible being dogged her steps, and stood bending over her.

* A little boy.

"*Gho manhy dhea ghud, a ban chohr, dherhum areesht!* the blessin' o' God on you, honest woman, I say again," said Mrs. Sullivan, repeating that *sacred* form of salutation with which the peasantry address each other. "'Tis a fine evenin', honest woman, glory be to him that sent the same, and amin! If it was cowld, I'd be axin' you to draw your chair in to the fire; but, any way, won't you sit down?"

As she ceased speaking, the piercing eye of the strange woman became riveted on her with a glare, which, whilst it startled Mrs. Sullivan, seemed full of an agony that almost abstracted her from external life. It was not, however, so wholly absorbing as to prevent it from expressing a marked interest, whether for good or evil, in the woman who addressed her so hospitably.

"Husht, now—husht," she said, as if aside—"husht, won't you—sure I may speak *the thing* to her—you said it—there now, husht!" And then fastening her dark eyes on Mrs. Sullivan, she smiled bitterly and mysteriously.

"I know you well," she said, without, however, returning the *blessing* contained in the usual reply to Mrs. Sullivan's salutation—"I know you well, Mary Sullivan—husht, now, husht—yes, I know you well, and the power of all that you carry about you; but you'd be better than you are—an' that's well enough *now*—if you had sense enough to know—ah, ah, ah! what's this!" she exclaimed abruptly, with three distinct shrieks, that seemed to be produced by sensations of sharp and piercing agony.

"In the name of goodness, what's over you, honest woman?" inquired Mrs. Sullivan, as she started from her chair, and ran to her in a state of alarm, bordering on terror—"Is it sick you are?"

The woman's face had got haggard, and its features distorted; but in a few minutes they resumed their peculiar expression of settled wildness and mystery. "Sick!" she replied, licking her parched lips, "*awirck, awirck*, look! look!" and she pointed,

with a shudder that almost convulsed her whole frame, to a lump that rose on her shoulders: this, be it what it might, was covered with a red cloak, closely pinned and tied with great caution about her body—"'tis here!—I have it!"

"Blessed mother!" exclaimed Mrs. Sullivan, tottering over to her chair, as finished a picture of horror as the eye could witness, "this day's Friday, the saints stand betwixt me an' all harm! Oh, holy Mary, protect me! *Nhanim an airh,*" &c., and she forthwith proceeded to bless herself, which she did thirteen times in honour of the blessed virgin, and the twelve apostles.

"Ay, it's as you see!" replied the stranger, bitterly. "It is here—husht, now—husht, I say—I will say *the thing* to her, mayn't I? Ay, indeed, Mary Sullivan, 'tis with me always—always.—Well, well—no, I won't, I won't—easy. Oh, holy saints, easy, and I won't!"

In the mean time, Mrs. Sullivan had uncorked her bottle of holy water, and plentifully bedewed herself with it, as a preservative against this mysterious woman and her dreadful secret.

"Blessed mother above!" she ejaculated, "the *Lianhan Shee!*" And as she spoke, with the holy water in the palm of her hand, she advanced cautiously, and with great terror, to throw it upon the stranger and the unearthly thing she bore.

"Don't attempt it!" shouted the other, in tones of mingled fierceness and terror; "do you want to give *me* pain without keeping *yourself* anything at all safer? Don't you know *it* doesn't care about your holy water? But I'd suffer for it, an' perhaps so would you."

Mrs. Sullivan, terrified by the agitated looks of the woman, drew back with affright, and threw the holy water with which she intended to purify the other on her own person.

"Why thin, you lost crathur, who or what are you at all?—don't, don't—for the sake of all the saints and

angels of heaven, don't come next or near me—keep your distance—but what are you, or how did you come to get that 'good thing' you carry about wid you?"

"Ay, indeed!" replied the woman bitterly, "as if I would or could tell you that! I say, you woman, you're doing what's not right in asking me a question you ought not to let cross your lips—look to yourself, and what's over you."

The simple woman, thinking her meaning literal, almost leaped off her seat with terror, and turned up her eyes to ascertain whether or not any dreadful appearance had approached her, or hung over her where she sat.

"Woman," said she, "I spoke you kind an' fair, an' I wish you well—but——"

"But what?" replied the other—and her eyes kindled into deep and profound excitement, apparently upon very slight grounds.

"Why—hem—nothin' at all sure, only——"

"Only what?" asked the stranger, with a face of anguish that seemed to torture every feature out of its proper lineaments.

"Dacent woman," said Mrs. Sullivan, whilst the hair began to stand with terror upon her head, "sure it's no wondher in life that I'm in a perplexity, whin a *Lianhan Shee* is under the one roof wid me. 'Tisn't that I want to know anything at all about it—the dear forbid I should; but I never hard of a person bein' tormented wid it as you are. I always used to hear the people say, that it thrated its friends well."

"Husht!" said the woman, looking wildly over her shoulder, "I'll not tell: it's on myself I'll leave the blame! Why, will you never pity me? Am I to be night and day tormented? Oh, you're wicked and cruel for no reason!"

"Thry," said Mrs. Sullivan, "an' bless yourself; call on God."

"Ah!" shouted the other, "are you going to get me killed?" and as she uttered the words, a spasmo-

dic working which must have occasioned great pain, even to torture, became audible in her throat: her bosom heaved up and down, and her head was bent repeatedly on her breast, as if by force.

"Don't mention that name," said she, "in my presence, except you mean to drive me to utter distraction. I mean," she continued, after considerable effort to recover her former tone and manner—"hear me with attention—I mean, woman—you, Mary Sullivan—that if you mention that holy name, you might as well keep plunging sharp knives into my heart! Husht! peace to me for one minute, tormentor! Spare me something, I'm in your power!"

"Will you ate anything?" said Mrs. Sullivan; "poor crathur, you look like hunger and distress; there's enough in the house, blessed be them that sent it! an' you had betther thry an' take some nourishment, any way;" and she raised her eyes in a silent prayer of relief and ease for the unhappy woman, whose unhallowed association had, in her opinion, sealed her doom.

"Will I?—will I?—oh!" she replied, "may you never know misery for offering it! Oh, bring me something—some refreshment—some food—for I'm dying with hunger."

Mrs. Sullivan, who, with all her superstition, was remarkable for charity and benevolence, immediately placed food and drink before her, which the stranger absolutely devoured---taking care occasionally to secrete under the protuberance which appeared behind her neck, a portion of what she eat. This, however, she did, not by stealth, but openly; merely taking means to prevent the concealed thing from being, by any possible accident, discovered.

When the craving of hunger was satisfied, she appeared to suffer less from the persecution of her tormentor than before; whether it was, as Mrs. Sullivan thought, that the food with which she plied it, appeased in some degree its irritability, or lessened that of the stranger, it was difficult to say; at all events,

she became more composed; her eyes resumed somewhat of a natural expression; each sharp ferocious glare, which shot from them with such intense and rapid flashes, partially disappeared; her knit brows dilated, and part of a forehead, which had once been capacious and handsome, lost the contractions which deformed it by deep wrinkles. Altogether the change was evident, and very much relieved Mrs. Sullivan, who could not avoid observing it.

"It's not that I care much about it, if you'd think it not right o' me, but it's odd enough for you to keep the lower part of your face muffled up in that black cloth, an' then your forehead, too, is covered down on your face a bit? If they're part of the *bargain*,"—and she shuddered at the thought—"between you an' anything that's not good—hem!—I think you'd do well to throw thim off o' you, an' turn to thim that can protect you from everything that's bad. Now a scapular would keep all the divils in hell from one; an' if you'd"———

On looking at the stranger she hesitated, for the wild expression of her eyes began to return.

"Don't begin my punishment again," replied the woman; "make no allus——don't make mention in my presence of anything that's good. Husht, husht—it's beginning—easy now—easy! No," said she, "I came to tell you, that only for my breaking a vow I made to this thing upon me, I'd be happy instead of miserable with it. I say, it's a good thing to have, if the person will use this bottle," she added, producing one, "as I will direct them."

"I wouldn't wish, for my part," replied Mrs. Sullivan, "to have anything to do wid it—neither act nor part;" and she crossed herself devoutly, on contemplating such an unholy alliance as that at which her companion hinted.

"Mary Sullivan," replied the other, "I can put good-fortune and happiness in the way of you and yours. It is for you the good is intended; if *you* don't get both, *no other* can," and her eyes kindled as she

spoke like those of the Pythoness in the moment of inspiration.

Mrs. Sullivan looked at her with awe, fear, and a strong mixture of curiosity; she had often heard that the *Lianhan Shee* had, through means of the person to whom it was bound, conferred wealth upon several, although it could never render this important servise to those who exercised direct authority over it. She, therefore, experienced something like a conflict between her fears and a love of that wealth, the possession of which was so plainly intimated to her.

"The money," said she, "would be one thing, but to have the *Lianhan Shee* planted over a body's shouldher—och! the saints preserve us!—no, not for oceans of hard goold would I have it in my company one minnit. But in regard to the money—hem!—why, if it could be managed widout havin' act or part wid *that thing*, people would do anything in rason an' fairity."

"You have this day been kind to me," replied the woman, "and that's what I can't say of many—dear help me!—husht! Every door is shut in my face! Does not every cheek get pale when I am seen? If I meet a fellow-creature on the road, they turn into the field to avoid me; if I ask for food, it's to a deaf ear I speak; if I am thirsty, they send me to the river. What house would shelter me? In cold, in hunger, in *dhruth*, in storm, and in tempest, I am alone and unfriended, hated, feared, an' avoided; starving in the winter's cold, and burning in the summer's heat. All this is my fate here; and—oh! oh! oh!—have mercy, tormentor—have mercy! I will not lift my thoughts *there*—I'll keep the paction—but spare me *now!*"

She turned round as she spoke, seeming to follow an invisible object, or, perhaps, attempting to get a more complete view of the mysterious being which exercised such a terrible and painful influence ever her. Mrs. Sullivan, also, kept her eye fixed upon the lump, and actually believed that she saw it move. Fear of incurring the displeasure of what it contained, and a

superstitious reluctance harshly to thrust a person from her door who had eaten of her food, prevented her from desiring the woman to depart.

"In the name of Goodness," she replied, "I will have nothing to do wid your gift. Providence, blessed be his name, has done well for me an' mine; an' it mightn't be right to go beyant what it has pleased *him* to give me."

"A rational sentiment!—I mean there's good sense in what you say," answered the stranger: "but you need not be afraid," and she accompanied the expression by holding up the bottle and kneeling: "now," she added, "listen to me, and judge for yourself, if what I say, when I swear it, can be a lie." She then proceeded to utter oaths of the most solemn nature, the purport of which was to assure Mrs. Sullivan that drinking of the bottle would be attended with no danger.

"You see this little bottle, drink it. Oh, for my sake and your own, drink it; it will give wealth without end, to you, and to all belonging to you. Take one half of it before sunrise, and the other half when he goes down. You must stand while drinking it, with your face to the east, in the morning; and at night, to the west. Will you promise to do this?"

"How would drinkin' the bottle get me money?" inquired Mrs. Sullivan, who certainly felt a strong tendency of heart to the wealth.

"That I can't tell now, nor would you understand it, even if I could; but you will know all when what I say is complied with."

"Keep your bottle, dacent woman. I wash my hands out of it: the saints above guard me from the timptation! I'm sure it's not right, for as I'm a sinner, 'tis gettin' stronger every minute widin me! Keep it; I'm loth to bid any one that *ett* o' my bread to go from my hearth, but if you go, I'll make it worth your while. Saints above, what's comin' over me! In my whole life I never had such a hankerin' afther money! Well, well, but it's quare entirely!"

"Will you drink it?" asked her companion. "If it does hurt or harm to you or yours, or anything but good, may what is hanging over me be fulfilled!" and she extended a thin, but, considering her years, not ungraceful arm, in the act of holding out the bottle to her kind entertainer.

"For the sake of all that's good and gracious take it without scruple—it is not hurtful, a child might drink every drop that's in it. Oh, for the sake of all you love, and of all that love you, take it!" and as she urged her, the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"No, no," replied Mrs. Sullivan, "it'll never cross my lips; not if it made me as rich as ould Hendherson, that airs his guineas in the sun, for fraid they'd get light by lyin' past."

"I entreat you to take it?" said the strange woman.

"Never, never!—once for all—I say, I won't; so spare your breath."

The firmness of the good housewife, was not, in fact, to be shaken; so, after exhausting all the motives and arguments with which she could urge the accomplishment of her design, the strange woman, having again put the bottle into her bosom, prepared to depart.

She had now once more become calm, and resumed her seat with the languid air of one who has suffered much exhaustion and excitement. She put her hand upon her forehead for a few moments, as if collecting her faculties, or endeavouring to remember the purport of their previous conversation. A slight moisture had broken through her skin, and altogether, notwithstanding her avowed criminality in entering into an unholy bond, she appeared an object of deep compassion.

In a moment, her manner changed again, and her eyes blazed out once more, as she asked her alarmed hostess.

"Again, Mary Sullivan, will you take the gift that I have it in my power to give you? ay or no? speak,

poor mortal, if you know what is for your own good?"

Mrs. Sullivan's fears, however, had overcome her love of money, particularly as she thought that wealth obtained in such a manner could not prosper; her only objection being to the means of acquiring it.

"Oh!" said the stranger, "am I doomed never to meet with any one who will take the promise off me by drinking of this bottle. Oh! but I am unhappy! What it is to fear—ah! ah!—and keep *his* commandments. Had *I* done so in my youthful time, I wouldn't now—ah—merciful mother is there no relief? kill me, tormentor; kill me outright, for surely the pangs of hereafter cannot be greater than those you now make me suffer. Woman," said she, and her muscles stood out in extraordinary energy—" woman, Mary Sullivan—ay, if you should kill me—blast me—where I stand, I will say the word—woman—you have daughters—teach them—to fear—" Having got so far, she stopped—her bosom heaved up and down—her frame shook dreadfully—her eye-balls became lurid and fiery—her hands were clenched, and the spasmodic throes of inward convulsions worked the white froth up to her mouth; at length, she suddenly became like a statue, with this wild supernatural expression intense upon her, and with an awful calmness, by far more dreadful than excitement could be, concluded by pronouncing in deep husky tones, the name of God.

Having accomplished this with such a powerful struggle, she turned round with pale despair in her countenance and manner, and with streaming eyes slowly departed, leaving Mrs. Sullivan in a situation not at all to be envied.

In a short time the other members of the family who had been out at their evening employments, returned. Bartley, her husband, having entered before his three daughters from milking, was the first to come in; presently the girls followed, and in a few minutes they sat down to supper, together with the servants, who dropped in one by one, after the toil of the day.

On placing themselves about the table, Bartley, as usual took his seat at one end; but Mrs. Sullivan, instead of occupying hers, sat at the fire in a state of uncommon agitation. Every two or three minutes she would cross herself devoutly, and mutter such prayers against spiritual influences of an evil nature, as she could compose herself to remember.

"Thin, why don't you come to your supper, Mary," said the husband, "while the sowens are warm? Brave and thick they are this night, any way."

His wife was silent, for so strong a hold had the strange woman and her appalling secret upon her mind, that it was not till he repeated his question three or four times—raising his head with surprise, and asking, "eh, thin Mary, what's come over you—is it unwell you are?"—that she noticed what he said.

"Supper!" she exclaimed, "unwell! 'tis a good right I'd have to be unwell, even if I was, which I am not—that is to *say* unwell—but I'm all through-other —I hope nothin' bad will happen, any way. Feel my face, Nannie," she added, addressing one of her daughters, "it's as cowld an' wet as a lime-stone—ay, an' if you found me a corpse before you, it wouldn't be at all strange."

There was a general pause at the seriousness of this intimation. The husband rose from his supper, and went up to the hearth where she sat.

"Turn round to the light," said he; "why Mary dear, in the name of wondher, what ails you? for you're like a corpse sure enough. Can't you tell us what has happened, or what put you in such a state? Why, childhre, the cowld sweat's teemin' off her!"

The poor woman, unable to sustain the shock produced by her interview with the stranger, found herself getting more weak, and requested a drink of water; but before it could be put to her lips, she laid her head over the back of the chair, and fainted. Grief, and uproar, and confusion, followed this alarming incident. The presence of mind, so necessary on such occasions, was wholly lost; one ran here, and another

there, all jostling against each other, without being cool enough to render her proper assistance. The daughters were in tears, and Bartley himself was dreadfully shocked by seeing his wife apparently lifeless before him.

She soon recovered, however, and relieved them from the apprehension of her death, which they thought had actually taken place. "Mary," said the husband, "something quare entirely has happened, or you wouldn't be in this state!"

"Did any of you see a strange woman lavin' the house, a minute or two before yees came in?" she inquired.

"No," they replied, "not a stim of any one did we see."

"Wurrah dheelish! No!—now is it possible yees didn't?" She then described her, but all declared they had seen no such person.

"Bartley, whisper," said she, and beckoning him over to her, in a few words she revealed the secret. The husband grew pale and crossed himself. "Mother of Saints! childhre," said he, "a *Lianhan Shee!*" The words were no sooner uttered, than every countenance assumed the pallidness of death; and every right hand was raised in the act of blessing the person, and crossing the forehead. "*The Lianhan Shee!!*" all exclaimed in fear and horror—"This day's Friday, God betwixt us an' harm!"

It was now after dusk, and the hour had already deepened into the darkness of a calm, moonless, summer night; the hearth, therefore, in a short time became surrounded by a circle, consisting of every person in the house; the door was closed and securely bolted;—a struggle for the safest seat took place; and to Bartley's shame be it spoken, he lodged himself on the hob within the jamb, as the most distant situation from the fearful being known as the *Lianhan Shee.* The recent terror, however, brooded over them all; their topic of conversation was the mysterious visit, of which Mrs. Sullivan gave a painfully accurate de-

tail; whilst every ear of those who composed her audience was set, and every single hair of their heads bristled up, as if awakened into distinct life by the story. Bartley looked into the fire soberly, except when the cat, in prowling about the dresser, electrified him into a start of fear, which sensation went round every link of the living chain about the hearth.

The next day the story spread through the whole parish, accumulating in interest and incident as it went. Where it received the touches, embellishments, and emendations, with which it was amplified, it would be difficult to say; every one told it, forsooth, *exactly* as he heard it from another; but indeed it is not improbable, that those through whom it passed, were unconscious of the additions it had received at their hands. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that imagination in such cases often colours highly without a premeditated design of falsehood. Fear and dread, however, accompanied its progress; such families as had neglected to keep holy water in their houses borrowed some from their neighbours; every old prayer which had become rusty from disuse, was brightened up—charms were hung about the necks of cattle—and gospels about those of children—crosses were placed over the doors and windows; no unclean water was thrown out before sunrise or after dusk—

> "E'en those prayed now who never prayed before,
> And those who always prayed, still prayed the more."

The inscrutable woman who caused such general dismay in the parish, was an object of much pity. Avoided, feared, and detested, she could find no rest for her weary feet, nor any shelter for her unprotected head. If she was seen approaching a house, the door and windows were immediately closed against her; if met on the way she was avoided as a pestilence. How she lived no one could tell, for none would permit themselves to know. It was asserted that she existed without meat or drink, and that she was doomed to

remain possessed of life, the prey of hunger and thirst, until she could get some one weak enough to break the spell by drinking her hellish draught, to taste which, they said, would be to change places with herself, and assume her despair and misery.

There had lived in the country about six months before her appearance in it, a man named Stephenson. He was unmarried, and the last of his family. This person led a solitary and secluded life, and exhibited during the last years of his existence strong symptoms of eccentricity, which for some months before his death, assumed a character of unquestionable derangement. He was found one morning hanging by a halter in his own stable, where he had, under the influence of his malady, committed suicide. At this time the public press had not, as now, familiarized the minds of the people to that dreadful crime, and it was consequently looked upon *then* with an intensity of horror, of which we can scarcely entertain any adequate notion. His farm remained unoccupied, for while an acre of land could be obtained in any other quarter, no man would enter upon such unhallowed premises. The house was locked up, and it was currently reported that Stephenson and the devil each night repeated the hanging scene in the stable; and that when the former was committing the "hopeless sin," the halter slipped several times from the beam of the stable loft, when Satan came, in the shape of a dark-complexioned man with a hollow voice, and secured the rope until Stephenson's end was accomplished.

In this stable did the wanderer take up her residence at night; and when we consider the belief of the people in the night-scenes which took place in it, we need not be surprised at the new feature of horror which this circumstance superadded to her character. Her presence and appearance in the parish were dreadful; a public outcry was soon raised against her, which, were it not from fear of her power over their lives and cattle, would have ended in her death. None, however, had courage to grapple with her, or to attempt

expelling her by violence, lest a signal vengeance might be taken on any one who dared to injure a woman that could call in the terrible aid of the *Lianhan Shee.*

In this state of feeling they applied to the parish priest, who, on hearing the marvellous stories related concerning her, and on questioning each man closely upon his authority, could perceive, that like most other reports, they were to be traced principally to the imagination and fears of the people. He ascertained, however, enough from Bartley Sullivan, to justify a belief that there was something certainly uncommon about the woman; and being of a cold, phlegmatic disposition, with some humour, he desired them to go home, if they were wise—he shook his head mysteriously as he spoke—"and do the woman no injury, if they didn't wish"——and with this abrupt hint he sent them about their business.

This, however, did not satisfy them. In the same parish lived a suspended priest, called Father Philip O'Dallaghy, who supported himself, as most of them do, by curing certain diseases of the people—miraculously! He had no other means of subsistence, nor, indeed, did he seem strongly devoted to life, or to the pleasures it afforded. He was not addicted to those intemperate habits which characterize "Blessed Priests" in general; spirits he never tasted, nor any food that could be termed a luxury, or even a comfort. His communion with the people was brief, and marked by a tone of severe contemptuous misanthropy. He seldom stirred abroad except during morning, or in the evening twilight, when he might be seen gliding amidst the coming darkness, like a dissatisfied spirit. His life was an austere one, and his devotional practices were said to be of the most remorseful character. Such a man, in fact, was calculated to hold a powerful sway over the prejudices and superstitions of the people. This was true. His power was considered almost unlimited, and his life one that would not disgrace the highest saint in the calendar. There were not wanting

some persons in the parish who hinted that Father Felix O'Rourke, the parish priest, was himself rather reluctant to incur the displeasure, or challenge the power, of the *Lianhan Shee*, by driving its victim out of the parish. The opinion of these persons was, in its distinct, unvarnished reality, that Father Felix absolutely showed the white feather on this critical occasion—that he became shy, and begged leave to decline being introduced to this intractable pair—seeming to intimate that he did not at all relish adding them to the stock of his acquaintances.

Father Philip they considered as a decided contrast to him on this point. His stern and severe manner, rugged, and when occasion demanded, daring, they believed suitable to the qualities requisite for sustaining the trial of such an interview. They accordingly waited on him; and after Bartley and his friends had given as faithful a report of the circumstances, as, considering all things, could be expected, he told Bartley he would hear from Mrs. Sullivan's own lips the authentic narrative. This was quite satisfactory, and what was expected from him. As for himself, he appeared to take no particular interest in the matter, farther than that of allaying the ferment and alarm which had spread through the parish.

"Plase your Reverence," said Bartley, "she came in to Mary, and she alone in the house, and for the matther o' that, I believe she laid hands upon her, and tossed and tumbled the crathur, and she but a sickly woman, through the four corners of the house. Not that Mary lets an so much, but I know from her way, when she speaks about her, that it's thruth, your Reverence.

"But didn't the *Lianhan Shee*," said one of them, "put a sharp-pointed knife to her breast, wid a divilish intintion of makin' her give the best of atin' an' dhrinkin' the house afforded?"

"She got the victuals, to a sartainty," replied Bartley, "and 'overlooked' my woman for her pains; for she's not the picture of herself since."

Every one now told some magnified and terrible circumstance, illustrating the formidable power of the Lianhan Shee.

When they had finished, the sarcastic lip of the priest curled into an expression of irony and contempt; his brow, which was naturally black and heavy, darkened; and a keen, but rather ferocious-looking eye, shot forth a glance, which, while it intimated disdain for those to whom it was directed, spoke also of a dark and troubled spirit in himself. The man seemed to brook with scorn the degrading situation of a religious quack, to which some incontrollable destiny had doomed him.

"I shall see your wife to-morrow," said he to Bartley; "and after hearing the plain account of what happened, I will consider what is best to be done with this dark, perhaps unhappy, perhaps guilty character; but whether dark, or unhappy, or guilty, I, for one, should not, and will not avoid her. Go, and bring me word to-morrow evening, when I can see her on the following day. Begone!"

When they withdrew, Father Philip paced his room for some time in silence and anxiety.

"Ay," said he, "wretches! sunk in the grossest superstition and ignorance, yet, perhaps, happier in your degradation than those who, in the pride of knowledge, can only look back upon a life of crime and misery. What is a sceptic? What is an infidel? Men who, when they will not submit to moral restraint, harden themselves into scepticism and infidelity, until, in the headlong career of guilt, that which was first adopted to lull the outcry of conscience, is supported by the pretended pride of principle. Principle in a sceptic! Hollow and devilish lie! Would *I* have plunged into scepticism, had I not first violated the moral sanctions of religion? Never. I became an infidel, because I first became a villain! Writhing under a load of guilt, that which I wished might be true, I soon forced myself to think true: and now"—he here clenched his hands and groaned—

"now—ay, now—and hereafter—oh, *that* hereafter! Why can I not shake the thoughts of it from my conscience? Religion! Christianity! With all the hardness of an infidel's heart, I feel your truth; because, if every man were the villain that infidelity would make him, then indeed might every man curse God for the existence bestowed upon him—as I would, but dare not do. Yet why can I not believe?—Alas! why should God accept an unrepentant heart?—Am I not a hypocrite, mocking him by a guilty pretension to his power, and leading the dark into thicker darkness? Then these hands—blood!—broken vows!—ha, ha, ha!—Well, go—let misery have its laugh, like the light that breaks from the thunder-cloud. Prefer Voltaire to Christ; sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind, as I have done—ha, ha, ha!—Swim, world—swim about me! I have lost the ways of Providence, and am dark! *She* awaits me; but I broke the chain that galled us: yet it still rankles—still rankles!"

The unhappy man threw himself into a chair in a paroxysm of frenzied agony. For more than an hour he sat in the same posture, until he became gradually hardened into a stiff, lethargic insensibility, callous and impervious to feeling, reason, or religion—an awful transition from a visitation of conscience so terrible as that which he had just suffered. At length he arose, and by walking moodily about, relapsed into his usual gloomy and restless character.

When Bartley went home, he communicated to his wife Father Philip's intention of calling, on the following day, to hear a correct account of the *Lianhan Shee.*

"Why, thin," said she, "I'm glad of it, for I intinded myself to go to him, any way, to get my new scapular consecrated. How-an-ever, as he's to come, I'll get a set of gospels for the boys an' girls, an' he can consecrate all when his hand's in. Aroon, Bartley, they say that man's so holy that he can do anything—ay, melt a body off the face o' the earth, like

snow off a ditch. Dear me, but the power they have is strange all out!"

"There's no use in gettin' him anything to ate or dhrink," replied Bartley; "he would'nt take a glass o' whisky once in seven years. Throth, myself thinks he's a little too dhry; sure he might be holy enough, an' yet take a sup of an odd time. There's Father Felix, an' though we all know he's far from bein' so blessed a man as him, yet he has friendship and neighbourliness in him, an' never refuses a glass in rason."

"But do you know what I was tould about Father Philip, Bartley?"

"I'll tell you that afther I hear it, Mary, my woman; you won't expect me to tell what I don't know? —ha, ha, ha!"

"Behave, Bartley, an' quit your jokin' now, at all evints; keep it till we're talkin' of somethin' else, an' don't let us be committin' sin, maybe, while we're spakin' of what we're spakin' about; but they say it's as thrue as the sun to the dial. The lint afore last itself it was—he never tasted mate or dhrink durin' the whole seven weeks! Oh, you needn't stare! it's well known by thim that has as much sinse as you—no, not so much as you'd carry on the point o' this knittin'-needle! Well, sure the housekeeper an' the two servants wondhered—faix, they couldn't do less—an' took it into their heads to watch him closely; an' what do you think—blessed be all the saints above!—what do you think they *seen?*"

"The goodness above knows; for me—I don't."

"Why, thin, whin he was asleep they seen a small silk thread in his mouth, that came down through the ceilin' from heaven, an' he suckin' it, just as a child would his mother's breast whin the crethur 'ud be asleep: so that was the way he was supported by the angels! An' I remimber myself, though he's a dark, spare, yellow man at all times, yet he never looked half so fat an' rosy as he did the same lint!"

"Glory be to heaven! Well, well—*it is* sthrange the power they have! As for him, I'd as *lee* meet

St. Pether, or St. Pathrick himself, as him ; for one can't but fear him, somehow."

"Fear him ! Och, it 'ud be the pity o' thim that 'ud do anything to vex or anger that man. Why, his very look 'ud wither thim, till there would'nt be the thrack* o' them on the earth ; an' as for his curse, why it 'ud scorch thim to ashes !"

As it was generally known that Father Philip was to visit Mrs. Sullivan on the next day, in order to hear an account of the mystery which filled the parish with such fear, a very great number of the parishioners were assembled in and about Bartley's, long before he made his appearance. At length he was seen walking slowly down the road, with an open book in his hand, on the pages of which he looked from time to time. When he approached the house, those who were standing about it assembled in a body, and, with one consent, uncovered their heads, and asked his blessing. His appearance bespoke a mind ill at ease ; his face was haggard, and his eyes bloodshot. On seeing the people kneel, he smiled with his usual bitterness, and, shaking his hand with an air of impatience over them, muttered some words, rather in mockery of the ceremony than otherwise. They then rose, and blessing themselves, put on their hats, rubbed the dust off their knees, and appeared to think themselves recruited by a peculiar accession of grace.

On entering the house the same form was repeated ; and when it was over, the best chair was placed for him by Mary's own hands, and the fire stirred up, and a line of respect drawn, within which none was to intrude, lest he might be in any degree incommoded.

"My good neighbour," said he to Mrs. Sullivan, "what strange woman is this, who has thrown the parish into such a ferment? I'm told she paid you a visit? Pray sit down."

"I humbly thank your Reverence," said Mary, courtseying lowly, "but I'd rather not sit, Sir, if you

* Track, foot-mark, put for life.

plase. I hope I know what respect manes, your Reverence? Barny Bradagh, I'll thank you to stand up, if you plase, an' his Reverence to the fore, Barny."

"I ax your Reverence's pardon, an' yours, too, Mrs. Sullivan: sure we didn't mane the disrespect, any how, Sir, plase your Reverence."

"About this woman, and the *Lianhan Shee?*" said the priest, without noticing Barny's apology. "Pray what do you precisely understand by a *Lianhan Shee?*"

"Why, Sir," replied Mary, "some sthrange bein' from the good people, or fairies, that sticks to some persons. There's a bargain, Sir, your Reverence, made atween thim; an' the divil, Sir, that is the ould boy—the saints about us!—has a hand in it. The *Lianhan Shee*, your Reverence, is never seen only by thim it keeps wid; but—hem!—it always, wid the help of the ould boy, conthrives, Sir, to make the person brake the agreement, an' thin it has *thim* in *its* power; but if they *don't* brake the agreement, thin *it's* in *their* power. If they can get any body to put in their place, they may get out o' the bargain; for they can, of a sartainty, give oceans o' money to people, but can't take any themselves, plase your Reverence. But sure where's the use o' me to be tellin' your Reverence what you know better nor myself?—an' why shouldn't you, or any one that has the power you have?"

He smiled again at this in his own peculiar manner, and was proceeding to inquire more particularly into the nature of the interview between them, when the noise of feet, and sounds of general alarm, accompanied by a rush of people into the house, arrested his attention, and he hastily inquired into the cause of the commotion. Before he could receive a reply, however, the house was almost crowded; and it was not without considerable difficulty that, by the exertions of Mrs. Sullivan and Bartley, sufficient order and quiet were obtained to hear distinctly what was said.

"Plase your Reverence," said several voices at once,

"they're comin', hot-foot, into the very house to us! Was ever the likes seen? an' they must know right well, Sir, that you're widin in it."

"Who are comin?" he inquired.

"Why the woman, Sir, an' her *good pet*, the *Lianhan Shee*, your Reverence."

"Well," said he, "but why should you all appear so blanched with terror? Let her come in, and we shall see how far she is capable of injuring her fellow-creatures: some maniac," he muttered, in a low soliloquy, "whom the villany of the world has driven into derangement—some victim to a hand like m——. Well, they say there *is* a Providence, yet such things are permitted!"

"He's sayin' a prayer now," observed one of them; "haven't we a good right to be thankful that he's in the place wid us while she's in it, or dear knows what harm she might do us—maybe *rise* the wind!"

As the latter speaker concluded, there was a dead silence. The persons about the door crushed each other backwards, their feet set out before them, and their shoulders laid with violent pressure against those who stood behind, for each felt anxious to avoid all danger of contact with a being against whose power even a blessed priest found it necessary to guard himself by a prayer.

At length a low murmur ran among the people—"Father O'Rourke!—here's Father O'Rourke!—he has turned the corner afther her, an' they're both comin' in."[2] Immediately they entered, but it was quite evident from the manner of the worthy priest, that he was unacquainted with the person of this singular being. When they crossed the threshold, the priest advanced, and expressed his surprise at the throng of people assembled.

"Plase your Reverence," said Bartley, "that's the woman," nodding significantly towards her as he spoke, but without looking at her person, lest the evil-eye he dreaded so much might meet his, and give him "the blast."

The dreaded female, on seeing the house in such a crowded state, started, paused, and glanced with some terror at the persons assembled. Her dress was not altered since her last visit; but her countenance, though more meagre and emaciated, expressed but little of the unsettled energy which then flashed from her eyes, and distorted her features by the depth of that mysterious excitement by which she had been agitated. Her countenance was still muffled as before, the awful protuberance rose from her shoulders, and the same band which Mrs. Sullivan had alluded to during their interview, was bound about the upper part of her forehead.

She had already stood upwards of two minutes, during which the fall of a feather might be heard, yet none bade God bless her—no kind hand was extended to greet her—no heart warmed in affection towards her; on the contrary, every eye glanced at her, as a being marked with enmity towards God. Blanched faces and knit brows, the signs of fear and hatred, were turned upon her; her breath was considered pestilential, and her touch paralysis. There she stood, proscribed, avoided, and hunted like a tigress, all fearing to encounter, yet wishing to exterminate her! Who could she be?—or what had she done, that the finger of the Almighty marked her out for such a fearful weight of vengeance?

Father Philip rose and advanced a few steps, until he stood confronting her. His person was tall, his features dark, severe, and solemn; and when the nature of the investigation about to take place is considered, it need not be wondered at, that the moment was, to those present, one of deep and impressive interest—such as a visible conflict between a supposed champion of God and a supernatural being was calculated to excite.

"Woman," said he, in his deep stern voice, "tell me who and what you are, and why you assume a character of such a repulsive and mysterious nature, when it can entail only misery, shame, and persecution on

yourself? I conjure you, in the name of Him after whose image you are created, to speak truly!"

He paused, and the tall figure stood mute before him. The silence was dead as death—every breath was hushed—and the persons assembled stood immovable as statues! Still she spoke not; but the violent heaving of her breast evinced the internal working of some dreadful struggle. Her face before was pale—it was now ghastly; her lips became blue, and her eyes vacant.

"Speak!" said he, "I conjure you in the name of the power by whom you live!"

It is probable that the agitation under which she laboured was produced by the severe effort made to sustain the unexpected trial she had to undergo.

For some minutes her struggle continued; but having begun at its highest pitch, it gradually subsided, until it settled in a calmness which appeared fixed and awful as the resolution of despair. With breathless composure she turned round, and put back that part of her dress which concealed her face, except the band on her forehead, which she did not remove; having done this, she turned again, and walked calmly towards Father Philip, with a deadly smile upon her thin lips. When within a step of where he stood, she paused, and riveting her eyes upon him, exclaimed:

"Who, and what am I? The victim of infidelity and you, the bearer of a cursed existence, the scoff and scorn of the world, the monument of a broken vow and a guilty life, a being scourged by the scorpion lash of conscience, blasted by periodical insanity, pelted by the winter's storm, scorched by the summer's heat, withered by starvation, hated by man, and touched into my inmost spirit by the anticipated tortures of future misery. I have no rest for the sole of my foot, no repose for a head distracted by the contemplation of a guilty life; I am the unclean spirit which walketh to seek rest and findeth none; I am—*what you made me!* Behold," she added, holding up the bottle, "this failed, and I live to accuse you.

But no, you are my husband—though our union was but a guilty form, and I will bury that in silence. You thought me dead, and you flew to avoid punishment—did you avoid it? No; the finger of God has written pain and punishment upon your brow. I have been in all characters, in all shapes, have spoken with the tongue of a peasant, moved in my natural sphere; but my knees were smitten, my brain stricken, and the wild malady which banishes me from from soeiety has been upon me for years. Such I am, and such I say, have you made me. As for you, kind-hearted woman, there was nothing in this bottle but pure water. The interval of reason returned this day, and having remembered glimpses of our conversation, I came to apologize to you, and to explain the nature of my unhappy distemper, and to beg a little bread, which I have not tasted for two days. I at times conceive myself attended by an evil spirit, shaped out by a guilty conscience, and this is the only familiar which attends me, and by it I have been dogged into madness through every turning of life. Whilst it lasts I am subject to spasms and convulsive starts which are exceedingly painful. The lump on my back is the robe I wore when innocent in my peaceful convent."

The intensity of general interest was now transferred to Father Philip; every face was turned towards him, but he cared not. A solemn stillness yet prevailed among all present. From the moment she spoke, her eye drew his with the power of a basilisk. His pale face became like marble, not a muscle moved; and when she ceased speaking, his blood-shot eyes were still fixed upon her countenance with a gloomy calmness like that which precedes a tempest. They stood before each other, dreadful counterparts in guilt, for truly his spirit was as dark as hers.

At length he glanced angrily around him: "Well," said he, "what is it now, ye infatuated wretches, to trust in the sanctity *of man?* Learn from me to place the same confidence *in God* which you place in his *guilty creatures*, and you will not lean on a broken

reed. Father O'Rourke, you, too, witness my disgrace, but not my punishment. It is pleasant, no doubt, to have a topic for conversation at your conferences; enjoy it. As for you, Margaret, if society lessen misery, we may be less miserable. The band of your order, and the remembrance of your vow is on your forehead, like the mark of Cain—tear it off, and let it not blast a man who is the victim of prejudice still, nay of superstition, as well as of guilt; tear it from my sight." His eyes kindled fearfully as he attempted to pull it away by force.

She calmly took it off, and he immediately tore it into pieces, and stamped upon the fragments as he flung them on the ground.

"Come," said the despairing man—"come—there is shelter for you, *but no peace!*---food, and drink, and raiment, *but no peace!*---NO PEACE!" As he uttered these words, in a voice that rose rapidly to its highest pitch, he took her hand, and they both departed to his own residence.

The amazement and horror of those who were assembled in Bartley's house cannot be described. Our readers may be assured that they deepened in character as they spread through the parish. An undefined fear of this mysterious pair seized upon the people, for their images were associated in their minds with darkness and crime, and supernatural communion. The departing words of Father Philip rang in their ears: they trembled, and devoutly crossed themselves, as fancy again repeated the awful exclamation of the priest---"no peace! no peace!"

When Father Philip and his unhappy associate went home, he instantly made her a surrender of his small property; but with difficulty did he command sufficient calmness to accomplish even this. He was distracted---his blood seemed to have been turned to fire---he clenched his hands, and he gnashed his teeth, and exhibited the wildest symptoms of madness. About ten o'clock he desired fuel for a large fire to be brought into the kitchen, and got a strong cord, which he coiled,

and threw carelessly on the table. The family were then ordered to bed. About eleven they were all asleep; and at the solemn hour of twelve he heaped addititional fuel upon the living turf, until the blaze shone with scorching light through the kitchen. Dark and desolating was the tempest within him, as he paced, with agitated steps, before the crackling fire.

"She is risen!" he exclaimed---"the spectre of all my crimes is risen, to haunt me through life! I *am* a murderer---yet she lives, and my guilt is not the less! The stamp of eternal infamy is upon me---the finger of scorn will mark me out---the tongue of reproach will sting me like that of the serpent---the deadly touch of shame will cover me like a leper---the laws of society will crush the murderer, not the less that his wickedness in blood has miscarried: after that comes the black and terrible tribunal of the Almighty's vengeance ---of his fiery indignation! Hush!---What sounds are those? They deepen---they deepen! Is it thunder? It cannot be the crackling of the blaze! It *is* thunder! ---but it speaks only to *my* ear! Hush!---Great God, there is a change in my voice! It is hollow and supernatural! Could a change have come over me? Am I living? Could I have——Hah!---Could I have departed? and am I now at length given over to the worm that never dies? If it be at my heart I may feel it. God!---I am damned! Here is a viper twined about my limbs, trying to dart its fangs into my heart! Hah!---there are feet pacing in the room, too, and I hear voices! I am surrounded by evil spirits! Who's there? What are you? Speak!---they are silent!--- There is no answer! Again comes the thunder! But perchance this is not my place of punishment, and I will try to leave these horrible spirits!"

He opened the door, and passed out into a small green field that lay behind the house. The night was calm, and the silence profound as death. Not a cloud obscured the heavens;---the light of the moon fell upon the stillness of the scene around him, with all the touching beauty of a moonlit midnight in summer.

Here he paused a moment, felt his brow, then his heart, the palpitations of which fell audibly upon his ear. He became somewhat cooler; the images of madness which had swept through his stormy brain disappeared, and were succeeded by a lethargic vacancy of thought, which almost deprived him of the consciousness of his own identity. From the green field he descended mechanically to a little glen which opened beside it. It was one of those delightful spots to which the heart clingeth. Its sloping sides were clothed with patches of wood, on the leaves of which the moonlight glanced with a soft lustre, rendered more beautiful by their stillness. That side on which the light could not fall, lay in deep shadow, which occasionally gave to the rocks and small projecting precipices an appearance of monstrous and unnatural life. Having passed through the tangled mazes of the glen, he at length reached its bottom, along which ran a brook, such as in the description of the poet,—

> "——— In the leafy month of June.
> Unto the sleeping woods all night,
> Singeth a quiet tune."

Here he stood, and looked upon the green winding margin of the streamlet—but its song he heard not. With the terrors of a guilty conscience, the beautiful in nature can have no association. He looked up the glen, but its picturesque windings, soft vistas, and wild underwood mingling with grey rocks and taller trees, all mellowed by the moon-beams, had no charms for him. He maintained a profound silence—but it was not the silence of reflection. He endeavoured to recall the scenes of the past day, but could not bring them back to his memory. Even the fiery tide of thought, which, like burning lava, seared his brain a few moments before, was now cold and hardened. He could remember nothing. The convulsion of his mind was over, and his faculties were impotent and collapsed.

In this state he unconsciously retraced his steps, and had again reached the paddock adjoining his house, when, as he thought, the figure of his paramour stood before him. In a moment his former paroxysm returned, and with it the gloomy images of a guilty mind, charged with the extravagant horrors of brain-struck madness.

"What!" he exclaimed, "the band still on your forehead! Tear it off!"

He caught at the form as he spoke, but there was no resistance to his grasp. On looking at her again she had ceased to be visible. The storm within him arose once more; he rushed into the kitchen, where the fire blazed out with fiercer heat again; he imagined that the thunder came to his ears, but the thunderings which he heard were only the voice of conscience. Again his own footsteps and his voice sounded in his fancy as the footsteps and voices of fiends, with which his imagination peopled the room. His state and his existence seemed to him a confused and troubled dream; he tore his hair—threw it on the table—and immediately started back with a hollow groan. His locks, which but a few hours before had been as black as the raven's wing, were now white as snow!

On discovering this, he gave a low but frantic laugh. "Ha, ha, ha!" he exclaimed; "here is another mark—here is food for despair. Silently, but surely, did the hand of God work this, as a proof that I am hopeless! But I will bear it; I will bear the sight! I now feel myself a man blasted by the eye of God himself! Ha, ha, ha! Food for despair! Food for despair!"

Immediately he passed into his own room, and approaching the looking-glass beheld a sight calculated to move a statue. His hair had become literally white, but the shades of his dark complexion, now distorted by terror and madness, flitted, as his features worked under the influence of his tremendous passions, into an expression so frightful, that deep fear came over himself. He snatched one of his razors, and fled from the glass

to the kitchen. He looked upon the fire, and saw the white ashes lying around its edge.

"Ha!" said he, "the light is come! I see the sign. I am directed, and I will follow it. There is yet ONE hope. The immolation! I shall be saved, yet so as by fire. It is for this my hair has become white:—the sublime warning for my self-sacrifice! The colour of ashes!—white—white! It is so! I will sacrifice my body in material fire, to save my soul from that which is eternal! But I had anticipated the SIGN! The self-sacrifice is accepted!

We must here draw a veil over that which ensued, as the description of it would be both unnatural and revolting. Let it be sufficient to say, that the next morning he was found burned to a cinder, with the exception of his feet and legs, which remained as monuments of, perhaps, the most dreadful suicide that ever was committed by man. His razor, too, was found bloody, and several clots of gore were discovered about the hearth; from which circumstances it was plain that he had reduced his strength so much by loss of blood, that when he committed himself to the flames, he was unable, even had he been willing, to avoid the fiery and awful sacrifice of which he made himself the victim. If anything could deepen the impression of fear and awe, already so general among the people, it was the unparalleled nature of his death. Its circumstances are well known in the parish and county wherein it occurred—*for it is no fiction*, gentle reader! and the titular bishop who then presided over the diocese, declared, that while he lived, no person bearing the unhappy man's name should ever be admitted to the clerical order.

The shock produced by his death struck the miserable woman into the darkness of settled derangement. She survived him some years, but wandered about through the province, still, according to the superstitious belief of the people, tormented by the terrible enmity of the *Lianhan Shee.*—(A.)

TUBBER DERG;

OR

THE RED WELL.

The following story owes nothing to any colouring or invention of mine; it is unhappily a true one, and to me possesses a peculiar and melancholy interest, arising from my intimate knowledge of the man whose fate it holds up as a moral lesson to Irish landlords. I knew him well, and many a day and hour have I played about his knee, and ran, in my boyhood, round his path, when, as he said himself, the world was no trouble to him.

On the south side of a sloping tract of light ground, lively, warm, and productive, stood a white, moderate-sized farm-house, which, in consequence of its conspicuous situation, was a prominent, and, we may add, a graceful object in the landscape of which it formed a part. The spot whereon it stood was a swelling natural terrace, the soil of which was heavier and richer than that of the adjoining lands. On each side of the house stood a clump of old beeches, the only survivors of that species then remaining in the country. These beeches extended behind the house in a kind of angle, with opening enough at their termination to form a vista, through which its white walls glistened with beautiful effect in the calm splendour of a summer evening. Above the mound on which it stood, rose two steep hills, overgrown with furze and fern, except on their tops, which were clothed with purple heath; they were also covered with patches of broom,

and studded with grey rocks, which sometimes rose singly or in larger masses, pointed or rounded into curious and fantastic shapes. Exactly between these hills the sun went down during the month of June, and nothing could be in finer relief than the rocky and picturesque outlines of their sides, as, crowned with thorns and clumps of wild ash, they appeared to overhang the valley, whose green foliage was gilded by the sun-beams, which lit up the scene into radiant beauty. The bottom of this natural chasm, which opened against the deep crimson of the evening sky, was nearly upon a level with the house, and completely so with the beeches that surrounded it. Brightly did the sinking sun fall upon their tops, whilst the neat white house below, in their quiet shadow, sent up its wreath of smoke among their branches, itself an emblem of contentment, industry, and innocence. It was, in fact, a lovely situation; perhaps the brighter to me, that its remembrance is associated with days of happiness and freedom from the cares of a world, which, like a distant mountain, darkens as we approach it, and only exhausts us in struggling to climb its rugged and barren paths.

There was to the south-west of this house, another little hazel glen, that ended in a precipice formed by a single rock some thirty feet high, over which tumbled a crystal cascade into a basin worn in its hard bed below. From this basin the stream murmured away through the copse-wood, until it joined a larger rivulet that passed, with many a winding, through a fine extent of meadows adjoining it. Across the foot of this glen, and past the door of the house we have described, ran a bridle road, from time immemorial; on which, as the traveller ascended it towards the house, he appeared to track his way in blood, for a chalybeate *spa* arose at its head, oozing out of the earth, and spread itself in a crimson stream over the path in every spot whereon a foot-mark could be made. From this circumstance it was called Tubber Derg, or the Red Well. In the meadow where the glen terminated, was

another spring of delicious crystal; and clearly do I remember the ever-beaten path-way that led to it through the grass, and up the green field which rose in a gentle slope to the happy-looking house of Owen M'Carthy, for so was the man called, who resided under its peaceful roof.

I will not crave your pardon, gentle reader, for dwelling at such length upon a scene so dear to my heart as this, because I write not now so much for your gratification as my own. Many an eve of gentle May have I pulled the Maygowans which grew about that well, and over that smooth meadow. Often have I raised my voice to its shrillest pitch, that I might hear its echoes rebounding in the bottom of the green and still glen, where silence, so to speak, was deepened by the continuous murmur of the cascade above; and when the cuckoo uttered her first note from among the hawthorns on its side, with what trembling anxiety did I, an urchin of some eight or nine years, look under my right foot, for the white hair, whose charm was such, that, by keeping it about me, the first female name I should hear was destined, I believed in my soul, to be that of my future wife. Sweet was the song of the thrush, and mellow the whistle of the blackbird, as they rose in the stillness of evening over the "birken shaws" and green dells of this secluded spot of rural beauty. Far, too, could the rich voice of Owen M'Carthy be heard along the hills and meadows, as, with a little chubby urchin at his knee, and another in his arms, he sat on a bench beside his own door, singing the "Trougha" in his native Irish; whilst Kathleen his wife, with her two maids, each crooning a low song, sat before the door milking the cows, whose sweet breath mingled its perfume with the warm breeze of evening.

Owen M'Carthy was descended from a long line of honest ancestors, whose names had never, within the memory of man, been tarnished by the commission of a mean or disreputable action. They were always a kind-hearted family, but stern and proud in the com-

mon intercourse of life. They believed themselves to be, and probably were, a branch of the Mac Carthy More stock; and, although only the possessors of a small farm, it was singular to observe the effect which this conviction produced upon their bearing and manners. To it might, perhaps, be attributed the high and stoical integrity for which they were remarkable. This severity, however, was no proof that they wanted feeling, or were insensible to the misery and sorrows of others; in all the little cares and perplexities that chequered the peaceful neighbourhood in which they lived, they were ever the first to console, or, if necessary, to support a distressed neighbour with the means which God had placed in their possession; for, being industrious, they were seldom poor. Their words were few, but sincere, and generally promised less than the honest hearts that dictated them intended to perform. There is in some persons a hereditary feeling of just principle, the result neither of education, nor of a clear moral sense, but rather a kind of instinctive honesty which descends, like a constitutional bias, from father to son, pervading every member of the family. It is difficult to define this, or to assign its due position in the scale of human virtues. It exists in the midst of the grossest ignorance, and influences the character in the absence of better principles. Such was the impress which marked so strongly the family of which I speak. No one would ever think of imputing a dishonest act to the M'Carthys; nor would any person acquainted with them, hesitate for a moment to consider their word as good as the bond of another. I do not mean to say, however, that their motives of action were not higher than this instinctive honesty; far from it: but I say, that they possessed it *in addition* to a strong feeling of family pride, and a correct knowledge of their moral duties.

I can only take up Owen M'Carthy at that part of the past to which my memory extends. He was then a tall, fine-looking young man; silent, but kind. One of the earliest events within my recollection is his

wedding; after that the glimpse of his state and circumstances are imperfect; but, as I grew up, they became more connected, and I am able to remember him the father of four children; an industrious, inoffensive, small farmer, beloved, respected, and honoured. No man could rise, be it ever so early, who would not find Owen up before him; no man could anticipate him in an early crop, and if a widow or a sick acquaintance were unable to get in their harvest, Owen was certain to collect the neighbours to assist them; to be the first there himself, with quiet benevolence, encouraging them to a zealous performance of the friendly task in which they were engaged.

It was, I believe, soon after his marriage, that the lease of the farm held by him expired. Until that time he had been able to live with perfect independence; but even the enormous rise of one pound per acre, though it deprived him in a great degree of his usual comforts, did not sink him below the bare necessaries of life. For some years after that he could still serve a deserving neighbour; and never was the hand of Owen M'Carthy held back from the wants and distresses of those whom he knew to be honest.

I remember once an occasion upon which a widow Murray applied to him for a loan of five pounds, to prevent her two cows from being auctioned for half a year's rent, of which she only wanted that sum. Owen sat at dinner with his family when she entered the house in tears, and, as well as her agitation of mind permitted, gave him a detailed account of her embarrassment.

"The blessin' o' God be upon all here," said she, on entering.

"The double o' that to you, Rosha," replied Owen's wife: "won't you sit in an' be atin'?—here's a sate beside Nanny; come over, Rosha."

Owen only nodded to her, and continued to eat his dinner, as if he felt no interest in her distress. Rosha sat down at a distance, and with the corner of a red handkerchief to her eyes, shed tears in that bitterness

of feeling which marks the helplessness of honest industry under the pressure of calamity.

"In the name o' goodness, Rosha," said Mrs. M'Carthy, "what ails you, asthore? Sure Jimmy—God spare him to you—wouldn't be dead?"

"Glory be to God! no, avourneen machree. Och, och! but it 'ud be the black sight, an' the black day, that 'ud see my brave boy, the staff of our support, an' the bread of our mouth, taken away from us!—No, no, Kathleen, dear, it's not that bad wid me yet. I hope we'll never live to see his manly head laid down before us. 'Twas his own manliness, indeed, brought it an him—backin the sack when he was bringin' home our last *meldhre* from the mill; for you see he should do it, the crathur, to show his strinth, an' the sack, when he got it an, was too heavy for him, an' hurted the small of his back—for his bones, you see, are ~~two~~ too young, an' hadn't time to fill up yet. No, avourneen. Glory be to God! he's gettin' betther wid me!"—and the poor creature's eyes glistened with delight through her tears and the darkness of her affliction.

Without saying a word, Owen, when she finished the eulogium on her son, rose, and, taking her forcibly by the shoulder, set her down at the table, on which a large pot-full of potatoes had been spread out, with a circle in the middle for a dish of rashers and eggs, into which dish every right hand of those about it was thrust, with a quickness that clearly illustrated the principle of competition as a stimulus to action.

"Spare your breath," said Owen, placing her rather roughly upon the seat, "an' take share of what's goin': when all's cleared off we'll hear you, but the sorra word till then."

"Musha, Owen," said the poor woman, "you're the same man still: sure we all know your ways; I'll strive avourneen to ate—I'll strive asthore—to plase you, an' the Lord bless you an' yours, an' may you never be as I an' my fatherless childhre are this sorrowful day!"—and she accompanied her words by a flood of tears.

Owen, without evincing the slightest sympathy, withdrew himself from the table. Not a muscle of his face was moved; but as the cat came about his feet at the time, he put his foot under her, and flung her as easily as possible to the lower end of the kitchen.

"Arrah, what harm did the crathur do," asked his wife, "that you'd kick her for, that way? an' why but you *ate* out your dinner?"

"*I'm* done," he replied, rather gruffly, "but that's no rason that Rosha, an' you, an' thim boys that has the work afore them, shouldn't finish your male's mate."

Poor Rosha thought that by his withdrawing he had already perceived the object of her visit, and of course concluded that her chance of succeeding was very slender.

The wife, who guessed what she wanted, as well as the nature of her suspicion, being herself as affectionate and obliging as Owen, reverted to the subject, in order to give her an opportunity of proceeding.

"Somethin' bitther, an' out o' the common coorse, is a throuble to you, Rosha," said she, "or you wouldn't be in the state you're in. The Lord look down on you this day, you poor crathur—widout the father of your childhre to stand up for you, an' your only other depindance laid on the broad of his back, all as one as a cripple: but no matther, Rosha; trust to Him that can be a husband to you, an' a father to your orphans—trust to Him, an' his blessed mother in heaven, this day, an' never fear but they'll *rise* up a frind for you. Musha, Owen, ate your dinner as you ought to do, wid your capers! How can you take a spade in your hand upon that morsel?"

"Finish your own," said her husband, "an' never heed me; jist let me alone. Don't you see that if I wanted it, I'd ate it, an' what more would you have about it?"

"Well, acushla, it's your own loss, sure, of a sartinty. An', Rosha, whisper ahagur, what can Owen or I do for you? Throth, it would be a bad day we'd

see you at a *deshort* for a friend, for you never wor nothin' else nor a civil, oblagin' neighbour yourself; an' him that's gone before—the Lord make his bed in heaven this day—was as good a warrant as ever broke bread, to sarve a friend, if it was at the hour of midnight."

"Ah! when I had *him*," exclaimed the distracted widow, "I never had occasion to throuble aither friend or neighbour; but he's gone, an' now its otherwise wid me—glory be to God for all his mercies—a wurrah dheelish! Why, thin, since I must spake, an' has no other frind to go to—but somehow I doubt Owen looks dark upon me—sure I'd put my hand to a stamp, if my word wouldn't do for it, an' sign the blessed crass that saved us, for the payment of it; or I'd give it to him in oats, for I hear you want some, Owen—Phatie oats it is, an' a betther shouldhered or fuller-lookin' grain never went undher a harrow—indeed, it's it that's the beauty, all out, if it's good seed you want."

"What is it for, woman alive?" inquired Owen, as he kicked a three-legged stool out of his way.

"What is it for, is it? Och, Owen darlin', sure my two brave cows is lavin' me. Paddy Dannellan, the driver, is over wid me beyant, an' has them ready to set off wid. I reared them both, the two of them, wid my own hands; *Cheehoney*, that knows my voice, an' would come to me from the fardest corner o' the field, is goin', an' nothin' will we have—nothin' will my poor sick boy have—but the black wather, or the dry salt; besides the butther of them bein' lost to us for the rent; or a small taste of it, of an odd time, for poor Jimmy. Owen, next to God, I have no friend to depind upon but yourself!"

"Me!" said Owen, as if astonished. "Phoo, that's quare enough! Now do you think Rosha—hut, hut, woman alive! Come, boys, you're all done; out wid yees to your spades, an' finish that *meerin* before night. Me!—hut, tut!"

"I have it all but five pounds, Owen, an' for the

sake of him that's in his grave—an' that, maybe, is able to put up his prayer for you"——

"An' what would you want *me* to do, Rosha? Fitther for you to sit down an' finish your dinner, when it's before you. I'm goin' to get an ould glove* that's somewhere about this chist, for I must weed out that bit of oats before night, wid a blessin'; and as he spoke, he passed into another room, as if he had altogether forgotten her solicitation, and in a few minutes returned.

"Owen, avick!—an' the blessin' of the fatherless be upon you, sure an' many a one o' them you have, any how, Owen?"

"Well, Rosha, well?"

"Och, och, Owen, it's low days wid me to be depindin' upon the sthranger? Little thim that reared me ever thought it 'ud come to this. You know I'm a dacent father's child, an' I have stooped to you, Owen M'Carthy—what I'd scorn to do to any other but yourself—poor an' friendless as I stand before you. Let them take the cows, thin, from my childhre; but the father of the fatherless will support thim an' me. Och, but it's well for the O'Donohoes that their landlord lives at home among themselves, for may the heavens look down on me, I would'nt know where to find mine, if one sight of him 'ud save me and my childhre from the grave! The Agent even he lives in Dublin, an' how could I lave my sick boy an' small *girshas* by themselves, to go a hundre miles, an' maybe not see him afther all. Little hopes I'd have from him, even if I did; he's paid for gatherin' in his rents; but it's well known he wants the touch of nathur for the sufferins of the poor, an' of them that's honest in their intintions."

"I'll go over wid you, Rosha, if that will be of any use," replied Owen, composedly; "come, I'll go an' spake to dirty Dannellan."

* In "hand-weeding," old gloves are used to prevent the hands from being injured by the thistles.

"The sorra blame I blame him, Owen," replied Rosha, "his bread's depindin' upon the likes of sich doins, an' he can't get over it; but a word from you, Owen, will save me, for who ever refused to take the word of a M'Carthy!"

When Owen and the widow arrived at the house of the latter, they found the situation of the bailiff laughable in the extreme. Her eldest son, who had been confined to his bed by a hurt received in his back, was up, and had got the unfortunate driver, who was rather old, wedged in between the dresser and the wall, where his cracked voice—for he was asthmatic—was raised to the highest pitch, calling for assistance. Beside him was a large tub half filled with water, into which the little ones were emptying small jugs, carried at the top of their speed from a puddle before the door. In the mean time Jemmy was tugging at the bailiff with all his strength—fortunately for that personage, it was but little—with the most sincere intention of inverting him into the tub, which contained as much muddy water as would have been sufficient to make him a subject for the deliberation of a coroner and twelve honest men. Nothing could be more conscientiously attempted than the task which Jemmy had proposed to execute; every tug brought out his utmost strength, and when he failed in pulling down the bailiff, he compensated himself for his want of success, by cuffing his ribs, and peeling his shins by hard kicks; whilst from those open points which the driver's grapple with his man naturally exposed, were inflicted on him by the rejoicing urchins, numberless punches of tongs, potato-washers, and sticks whose points were from time to time hastily thrust into the coals, that they might more effectually either blind or disable him in some other manner.

As one of the little ones ran out to fill his jug, he spied his mother and Owen approaching, on which, with the empty vessel in his hand, he flew towards them, his little features distorted by glee and ferocity, wildly mixed up together.

"Oh, mudher, mudher—ha, ha, ha!---don't come in yet; don't come in, Owen, till Jimmy, an' huz, an' the Denisses, gets the bailey drownded. We'll soon have the *bot** full; but Paddy and Jack Denis have the eyes amost pucked out of him; an' Katty's takin' the hook from behind the *cuppel*, to get it about his neck."

Owen and the widow entered with all haste, precisely at the moment when Dannellan's head was dipped, for the first time, into the vessel.

"Is it goin' to murdher him yees are?" said Owen, as he seized Jemmy with a grasp that transferred him to the opposite end of the house; "hould back, ye pack of young devils, an' let the man up. What did he come to do but his duty? I tell you, Jimmy, if you wor *at* yourself, an' in full strinth, that you'd have the man's blood on you where you stand, and would suffer as you ought to do for it."

"There let me," replied the lad, his eyes glowing, and his veins swollen with passion; "I don't care if I did. It would be no sin, an' no disgrace, to hang for the like of him; dacenter to do that, than stale a creel of turf, or a wisp of straw, 'tanny rate."

In the mean time, the bailiff had raised his head out of the water, and presented a visage which it was impossible to view with gravity. The widow's anxiety prevented her from seeing it in a ludicrous light; but Owen's severe face assumed a grave smile, as the man shook himself and attempted to comprehend the natnre of his situation. The young urchins, who had fallen back at the appearance of Owen and the widow, now burst into a peal of mirth, in which, however, Jemmy, whose fiercer passions had been roused, did not join.

"Paddy Dannellan," said the widow, "I take the mother of heaven to witness, that it vexes my heart to see you get such thratement in my place; an' I would'nt for the best cow in my byre that sich a *brieu-*

* A tub.

liagh happened. *Dher charp agus manim,** Jimmy, but I'll make you suffer for drawin' down this upon my head, and me had enough over it afore."

"I don't care," replied Jemmy; "whoever comes to take our property from us, an' us willin' to work, will suffer for it. Do you think I'd see thim crathurs at their dhry phatie, an' our cows standin' in a pound for no rason? No; high hangin' to me, but I'll split to the scull the first man that takes them; an' all I'm sorry for is, that it's not the vagabone landlord himself that's near me. That's our thanks for payin' him many a good pound in honesty and dacency, to him an' his; lavin' us to a schamin' agent, an' not even to that same, but to his undher-strappers, that's robbin' us on both sides between them. May hard fortune attind him, for a landlord! You may tell him this, Dannellan,—that his wisest plan is to keep clear of the counthry. Sure it's a gambler he is, they say, an' we must be harrished an' racked to support his villany: but wait a bit; maybe there's a good time comin', when we'll pay our money to thim that won't be too proud to hear our complaints wid their own ears, an' who won't turn us over to a divil's-limb of an agent. *He* had need, any how, to get his coffin sooner nor he thinks. What signifies hangin' in a good cause?" said he, as the tears of keen indignation burst from his glowing eyes. "It's a dacent death, an' a happy death, when it's for the right," he added—for his mind was evidently fixed upon the contemplation of those means of redress, which the habits of the country, and the prejudices of the people, present to them in the first moments of passion.

"It's well that Dannellan's one of ourselves," replied Owen, coolly, "otherwise, Jemmy, you said words that would lay you by the heels. As for you, Dannellan, you must look over this. The boy's the son of dacent poor parents, an' it's a new thing for him to see the cows druv from the place. The poor fel-

* By my soul and body.

low's vexed, too, that he has been so long laid up wid a sore back; an' so you see one thing or another has put him through other. Jimmy is warm-hearted, afther all, an' will be sorry for it when he cools, an' remimbers that *you* wor only doin' your duty."

"But what am I to do about the cows? Sure I can't go back widout either thim or the rint?" said Paddy, with a look of fear and trembling at Jemmy.

"The cows!" said another of the widow's sons, who then came in, "why, you dirty spalpeen of a rip, you may whistle on the wrong side o' your mouth for them. I *druv* them off of the estate; an' now take them, if you dar; it's conthrairy to law," said the urchin, "an' if you'd touch them, I'd make my mudher sarve you wid a *lattitat* or a *fiery-flashes.*"

This was a triumph to the youngsters, who began to shake their little fists at him, and to exclaim in a chorus—"Ha, you dirty rip! wait till we get you out o' the house, an' if we don't put you from ever drivin'! Why but you work like another?—ha, you'll get it!" —and every little fist was shook in vengeance at him.

"Whisht wid yees," said Jemmy to the little ones: "let him alone, he got enough. There's the cows for you; an' keen may the curse o' the widow an' orphans light upon you, an' upon them that sent you, from first to last!—an' that's the *best* we wish you!"

"Paddy," said Owen to the bailiff, "is there any one in the town below that will take the rint, an' give a resate for it? Do you think, man, that the neighbours of an honest, industrious woman 'ud see the cattle taken out of her byre for a thrifle? Hut, tut! no, man alive—no sich thing! There's not a man in the parish wid manes to do it, would see them taken away to be canted, at only about a fourth part of their value. Hut, tut—no!"

As the sterling fellow spoke, the cheeks of the widow were suffused with tears, and her son Jemmy's hollow eyes once more kindled, but with a far different expression from that which but a few minutes before flashed from them.

"Owen," said he, and utterance nearly failed him: "Owen, if *I* was well, it wouldn't be as it is wid us; but—no, indeed, it would not: but—may God bless you for this! Owen, never fear but you'll be paid: may God bless you, Owen!"

As he spoke the hand of his humble benefactor was warmly grasped in his. A tear fell upon it: for with one of those quick and fervid transitions of feeling so peculiar to the people, he now felt a strong, generous, emotion of gratitude, mingled, perhaps, with a sense of wounded pride, on finding the poverty of their little family so openly exposed.

"Hut, tut, Jimmy, avick," said Owen, who understood his feelings, "phoo, man alive! hut—hem! Why, sure it's nothin', at all at all; any body would do it---only a bare five-an'-twenty shillins: [it was five pounds]---any neighbour---Mick Cassidy, Jack Moran, or Pether M'Cullagh, would do it. Come Paddy, step out; the money's to the fore. Rosha put your cloak about you, and let us go down to the agint or clerk, or whatsomever he is---sure that makes no maxim any how; I suppose he has power to give a resate. Jemmy, go to bed again, you're pale, poor houchal; and childhre, ye crathurs ye, the cows won't be taken from yees, this bout. Come, in the name of God, let us go, and see everything rightified at once---hut tut---come."

Many similar details of Owen M'Carthy's useful life could be given, in which he bore an equally benevolent and Christian part. Poor fellow! he was, ere long, brought low; but to the credit of our peasantry, much as is said about their barbarity, he was treated, when helpless, with gratitude, pity, and kindness.

Until the peace of 1814, Owen's regular and systematic industry enabled him to struggle successfully against a weighty rent and sudden depression in the price of agricultural produce; that is, he was able, by the unremitting toil of a man remarkable alike for an unbending spirit and a vigorous frame of body, to pay his rent with tolerable regularity. It is true, a change

began to be visible in his personal appearance, in his farm, in the dress of his children, and in the economy of his household. Improvements which adequate capital would have enabled him to effect, were left either altogether unattempted, or in an imperfect state resembling neglect, though, in reality, the result of poverty. His dress at mass, and in fairs and markets, had, by degrees, lost that air of comfort and warmth which bespeak the independent farmer. The evidences of embarrassment began to disclose themselves in many small points, inconsiderable, it is true, but not the less significant. His house, in the progress of his declining circumstances, ceased to be annually ornamented by a new coat of whitewash; it soon assumed a faded and yellowish hue, and sparkled not in the setting sun as in the days of Owen's prosperity. It had, in fact, a wasted, unthriving look like its master; the thatch became black and rotten upon its roof, the chimneys sloped to opposite points, the windows were less neat, and, ultimately, when broken, were patched with a couple of leaves from the children's blotted copy-books. His out-houses also began to fail; the neatness of his little farm-yard, and the cleanliness which marked so conspicuously the space fronting his dwelling-house, disappeared in the course of time. Filth began to accumulate where no filth had been; his garden was not now planted so early, nor with such taste and neatness as before; his crops were later, and less abundant; his haggards neither so full nor so trim as they were wont to be, nor his ditches and enclosures kept in such good repair. His cars, ploughs, and other farming implements, instead of being put under cover, were left exposed to the influence of wind and weather, where they soon became crazy and useless.

Such, however, were only the slighter symptoms of his bootless struggle against the general embarrassment into which the agricultural interests were, year after year, so unhappily sinking.

Had the tendency to general distress among the class to which he belonged become stationary, Owen

would have continued by toil and incessant exertion to maintain his ground; but, unfortunately, there was no point at which the national depression could then stop. Year after year produced deeper, more extensive, and more complicated misery; and when he hoped that every succeeding season would bring an improvement in the market, he was destined to experience not merely a fresh disappointment, but an unexpected depreciation in the price of his corn, butter, and other disposable commodities.

When a nation is reduced to such a state, no eye but that of God himself can see the appalling wretchedness to which a year of disease and scarcity strikes down the poor and working classes.

Owen, after a long and noble contest for nearly three years, sank, at length, under the united calamities of disease and scarcity. The father of the family was laid low upon the bed of sickness, and those of his little ones who escaped it were almost consumed by famine. This two-fold shock sealed his ruin; his honest heart was crushed—his hardy frame shorn of its strength, and he to whom every neighbour fled as to a friend, now required friendship at a moment when the wide-spread poverty of the country rendered its assistance hopeless.

On rising from his bed of sickness, the prospect before him required his utmost fortitude to bear. He was now wasted in energy both of mind and body, reduced to utter poverty, with a large family of children, too young to assist him, without means of retrieving his circumstances, his wife and himself gaunt skeletons, his farm neglected, his house wrecked, and his offices falling to ruin, yet every day bringing the half-year's term nearer! Oh, ye who riot on the miseries of such men—ye who roll round the easy circle of fashionable life, think upon this picture! Ye vile and heartless landlords, who see not, hear not, know not those to whose heart-breaking toil ye owe the only merit ye possess—that of rank in society—come and contemplate this virtuous man, as unfriended, unas-

sisted, and uncheered by those who are bound by a strong moral duty to protect and aid him, he looks shuddering into the dark cheerless future! Is it to be wondered at that he, and such as he, should, in the misery of his despair, join the nightly meetings, be lured to associate himself with the incendiary, or seduced to grasp, in the stupid apathy of wretchedness, the weapon of the murderer? By neglecting the people, by draining them, with merciless rapacity, of the means of life; by goading them on under a cruel system of rack rents, ye become not their natural benefactors, but curses and scourges, nearly as much in reality as ye are in their opinion.

When Owen rose, he was driven by hunger, direct and immediate, to sell his best cow; and having purchased some oatmeal at an enormous price, from a well known devotee in the parish, who hoarded up this commodity for a "dear summer," he laid his plans for the future, with as much judgment as any man could display. One morning after breakfast he addressed his wife as follows:---

"Kathleen, mavourneen, I want to consult wid you about what we ought to do; things are low wid us, asthore; and except our heavenly Father puts it into the heart of them I'm goin' to mention, I don't know what we'll do, nor what 'ill become of these poor crathurs that's naked and hungry about us. God pity them, they don't know---and maybe that same's some comfort—the hardships that's before them. Poor crathurs, see how quiet and sorrowfully they sit about their little play, passin' the time for themselves as well as they can! Alley, acushla machree, come over to me. Your hair is bright and fair, Alley, and curls so purtily that the finest lady in the land might envy it, but, acushla, your colour's gone, your little hands are wasted away, too; that sickness was hard and sore upon you, *a colleen machree*, and he that 'ud spend his heart's blood for you, darlin', can do nothing to help you!"

He looked at the child as he spoke, and a slight

motion in the muscles of his face was barely perceptible, but it passed away; and, after kissing her, he proceeded:—

"Ay, ye crathurs—you and I, Kathleen, could earn our bread for ourselves yet, but these can't do it. This last stroke, darlin', has laid us at the door of both poverty and sickness, but blessed be the mother of heaven for it, they're all left wid us; and sure that's a blessin' we've to be thankful for—glory be to God!"

"Ay, poor things, it's well to have them spared, Owen dear; sure I'd rather a thousand times beg from door to door, and have my childher to look at, than be in comfort widout them."

"Beg!—that 'ud go hard wid me, Kathleen. I'd work—I'd live on next to nothing all the year round—but to see the crathurs that wor dacently bred up brought to that, I couldn't bear it, Kathleen—'twould break the heart widin in me. Poor as they are, they have the blood of kings in their veins; and, besides, to see a M'Carthy beggin' his bread in the counthry where his name was once great—The M'Carthy More, that was their title—No, acushla; I love them as I do the blood in my own veins; but I'd rather see them in the arms of God in heaven, laid down dacently, wid their little sorrowful faces washed, and their little bodies stretched out purtily before my eyes—I would—in the grave-yard there beyant, where all belonging to me lie, than have it cast up to them, or have it said, that ever a M'Carthy was seen beggin' on the highway."

"But, Owen, can you strike out no plan for us that 'ud put us in the way of comin' round agin? These poor ones, if we could hold out for two or three year, would soon be able to help us."

"They would—they would. I'm thinkin' this day or two of a plan: but I'm doubtful whether it 'ud come to any thing."

"What is it a-cushala? Sure we can't be worse nor we are, any way."

"I'm goin' to go to Dublin. I'm tould that the

landlord's come home from France, and that he's there now; and if I didn't see him, sure I could see the Agent. Now, Kathleen, my intintion 'ud be to lay our case before the Head Landlord himself, in hopes he might hould back his hand, and spare us for awhile. If I had a line from the agent, or a scrape of a pen that I could show at home to some of the nabours, who knows but I could borry what 'ud see us up agin! I think many of them 'ud be sorry to see me turned out; eh, Kathleen?"

The Irish are an imaginative people; indeed too much so, for either their individual or national happiness. And it is this and superstition, which also depends much upon imagination, that makes them so easily influenced by those extravagant dreams that are held out to them by persons who understand their character.

When Kathleen heard the plan on which Owen founded his expectations of assistance, her dark melancholy eye flashed with a portion of its former fire; a transient vivacity lit up her sickly features, and she turned a smile of hope and affection upon her children, then upon Owen.

"Arrah, thin, who knows, indeed!—who knows but he might do something for us? And maybe we might be as well as ever yet! May the Lord put it into his heart, this day! I declare ay!—maybe it was God put it into *your* heart, Owen!"

"I'll set off," replied her husband, who was a man of decision—"I'll set off on other morrow mornin'; and as nobody knows anything about it, so let there not be a word said upon the subject, good or bad. If I have success, well and good; but if not, why nobody need be the wiser."

The heart-broken wife evinced, for the remainder of the day, a lightness of spirits which she had not felt for many a month before. Even Owen was less depressed than usual, and employed himself in making such arrangements as he knew would occasion his family to feel the inconvenience of his absence less

acutely. But as the hour of his departure drew nigh, a sorrowful feeling of affection rising into greater strength and tenderness, threw a melancholy gloom around his hearth. According to their simple view of distance, a journey to Dublin was a serious undertaking, and to them it was such. Owen was in weak health, just risen out of illness, and what was more trying than any other consideration was, that since their marriage they had never been separated before.

On the morning of his departure, he was up before day-break, and so were his wife and children, for the latter had heard the conversation already detailed between them, and, with their simple-minded parents, enjoyed the gleam of hope which it presented; but this soon changed—when he was preparing to go, an indefinite sense of fear, and a more vivid clinging of affection marked their feelings. He himself partook of this, and was silent, depressed, and less ardent than when the speculation first presented itself to his mind. His resolution, however, was taken, and should he fail, no blame at a future time could be attached to himself. It was the last effort; and to neglect it, he thought, would have been to neglect his duty. When breakfast was ready, they all sat down in silence; the hour was yet early, and a rush-light was placed in a wooden candlestick that stood beside them, to afford light. There was something solemn and touching in the group as they sat in dim relief, every face marked by the traces of sickness, want, sorrow, and affection. The father attempted to eat, but he could not; Kathleen sat at the meal, but could taste nothing; the children ate, for hunger at the moment was predominant over every other sensation. At length it was over, and Owen rose to depart; he stood for a minute on the floor, and seemed to take a survey of his cold, cheerless house, and then of his family; he cleared his throat several times, but did not speak.

"Kathleen," said he, at length, "in the name of God I'll go; and may his blessin' be about you,

asthore machree, and guard you and these darlins till I come back to yees."

Kathleen's faithful heart could bear no more; she laid herself on his bosom—clung to his neck, and, as the parting kiss was given, she wept aloud, and Owen's tears fell silently down his worn cheeks. The children crowded about them in loud wailings, and the grief of this virtuous and afflicted family was of that profound description, which is ever the companion, in such scenes, of pure and genuine love.

"Owen!" she exclaimed—"Owen, *a-suilish machuil agus machree!*" I doubt we wor wrong in thinkin' of this journey. How can you, mayourneen, walk all the way to Dublin, and you so worn and weakly wid that sickness, and the bad feedin' both before and since? Och, give it up, achree, and stay wid us—let what will happen. You're not able for sich a journey, indeed you're not. Stay wid me and the childher, Owen; sure we'd be so lonesome widout you—will you, agrah? and the Lord will do for us some other way, maybe."

Owen pressed his faithful wife to his heart, and kissed her chaste lips with a tenderness which the heartless votaries of fashionable life can never know.

"Kathleen, asthore," he replied, in those terms of endearment which flow so tenderly through the language of the people—"sure whin I reminber your fair young face—your yellow hair, and the light that was in your eyes, acushla machree—but that's gone long ago—och, don't ax me to stop. Isn't it your lightsome laugh, whin you wor young, in my ears? and your step that 'ud not bend the flower of the field—Kathleen, I can't, indeed I can't bear to think of what you wor, nor of what you are now, when, in the course of age and nature, but a small change ought to be upon you! Sure I ought to make every struggle to take you and these sorrowful crathors out of the state you're in."

* Light of my eyes and of my heart.

The children flocked about them, and joined their entreaties to those of their mother. "Father, don't lave us---we'll be lonesome if you go; and if my mother 'ud get unwell, who'd be to take care of her? Father, don't lave your own 'weeny crathurs,' (a pet name he had for them)---maybe the meal 'ud be eat out before you'd come back; or maybe something 'ud happen you in that strange place."

"Indeed there's truth in what they say, Owen," said the wife; "do be said by your own Kathleen for this time, and don't take sich a long journey upon you. Afther all, maybe, you wouldn't see him---sure the nabours will help us, if you could only humble yourself to ax them!"

"Kathleen," said Owen, "when this is past, you'll be glad I went—indeed you will; sure it's only the tindher feelin' of our hearts, darlins. Who knows what the landlord may do when I see himself, and show him these resates---every penny paid him by our own family. Let me go, acushla; it *does* cut me to the heart to lave yees the way yees are in, even for awhile; but it's far worse to see your poor wasted faces, widout havin' it in my power to do anything for yees."

He then kissed them again, one by one; and pressing the affectionate partner of his sorrows to his breaking heart, he bade God bless them, and set out in the twilight of a bitter March morning. He had not gone many yards from the door, when little Alley ran after him in tears; he felt her hand upon the skirts of his coat, which he plucked with a smile of affection that neither tears nor sorrow could repress. "Father, kiss *me* again," said she. He stooped down and kissed her tenderly. The child then ascended a green ditch, and Owen, as he looked back, saw her standing upon it; her fair tresses were tossed by the blast about her face, as with straining eyes she watched him receding from her view. Kathleen and the other children stood at the door, and also with deep sorrow watched his form, until the angle of the bridle road rendered him no

longer visible; after which they returned slowly to the fire, and wept bitterly.

We believe no men are capable of bearing greater toil or privation than the Irish. Owen's *viaticum* was only two or three oaten cakes tied in a little handkerchief, and a few shillings in silver to pay for his bed. With this small stock of food and money, an oaken stick in his hand, and his wife's kerchief tied about his waist, he undertook a journey of one hundred and eighty miles in quest of a landlord who, so far from being acquainted with the distresses of his tenantry, scarcely knew even their names, and not one of them in person.

Our scene now changes to the metropolis. One evening, about half past six o'clock, a toil-worn man turned his steps to a splendid mansion in Mountjoy-square; his appearance was drooping, fatigued, and feeble. As he went along, he examined the numbers on the respective doors, until he reached *one*---before which he stopped for a moment; he then stepped out upon the street, and looked through the windows, as if willing to ascertain whether there was any chance of his object being attained. Whilst in this situation a carriage rolled rapidly up, and stopped with a sudden check that nearly threw the horses on their haunches. In an instant the thundering knock of the servant intimated the arrival of some person of rank; the hall door was opened, and Owen, availing himself of that opportunity, entered the hall. Such a visitor, however, was too remarkable to escape notice. The hand of the menial was rudely placed against his breast; and as the usual impertinent interrogatories were put to him, the pampered ruffian kept pushing him back, until the afflicted man stood upon the upper step leading to the door.

"For the sake of God, and let me spake but two words to him. I'm his tenant; and I know he's too much of a jintleman to turn away a man that has lived upon his honor's estate---father and son---for upwards of two hundre years. My name's Owen---"

"You can't see him, my good fellow, at this hour. Go to Mr. M——, his agent: we have company to dinner. He never speaks to a tenant on business; his agent manages all that. Please leave the way, here's more company."

As he uttered the last word, he pushed Owen back, who, forgetting that the stairs were behind him, fell—received a severe cut, and was so completely stunned, that he lay senseless and bleeding. Another carriage drove up, as the fellow, now much alarmed, attempted to raise him from the steps, and, by orders of the gentleman who came in it, he was brought into the hall. The circumstance now made some noise. It was whispered about, that one of Mr. ——'s tenants, a drunken fellow from the country, wanted to break in forcibly to see him; but then it was also asserted, that his scull was broken, and that he lay dead in the hall. Several of the gentlemen above stairs, on hearing that a man had been killed, immediately assembled about him, and by the means of restoratives, he soon recovered, though the blood streamed copiously from the wound in the back of his head.

"Who are you, my good man?" said Mr. S.

Owen looked about him rather vacantly, but soon collected himself, and replied, in a mournful and touching tone of voice—"I am one of your honour's tenants, from Tubber Derg; my name is Owen M'Carthy, your honour—that is, if you be Mr. ——."

"And pray what brought you to town, M'Carthy?"

"I wanted to make an humble appale to your honour's feelins, in regard of my bit of farm. I and my poor family, your honour, have been broken down by hard times and the sickness of the sason. God knows how *they* are."

"If you wish to speak to me about that, my good man, you must know I refer all these matters to my agent—go to him; he knows them best; and whatever is right and proper to be done for you, he will do it. Sinclair, give him a crown, and send him to the

—— Dispensary to get his head dressed. I say, Carthy, go to my agent; he knows whether your claim is just or not, and will attend to it accordingly."

"Plase your honour, I've been wid him, and he says he can do nothin' whatsomever for me. I went two or three times, and couldn't see him, he was so busy; and when I did get a word or two wid him, he tould me there was more offered for my land than I'm payin'; and that, if I did not pay up, I must be put out---God help me!"

"But I tell you, Carthy, I never interfere between him and my tenants."

"Och, indeed, and it would be well both for your honour's tinants and yourself, if you did, Sir. Your honour ought to know, Sir, more about us, and how we're thrated. I'm an honest man, Sir, and I tell you so for your good."

"And pray, Sir," said the Agent, stepping forward, for he had arrived a few minutes before, and heard the last observation of M'Carthy---"pray, how are they treated, you that know so well, and are so honest a man?---As for honesty, you might have referred to me for that, I think," he added.

"Mr. M——," said Owen, "we're thrated very badly. Sir, you needn't look at me, for I'm not afeerd to spake the thruth; no bullyin', Sir, will make me say anything in your favour that you don't desarve. You've broken the half of them by severity: you've turned the tinants aginst yourself and his honour here; and I tell you now, though you're to the fore, that, in the coorse of a short time, there'ill be bad work upon the estate, except his honour here, looks into his own affairs, and hears the complaints of the people; look at these resates, yer honour, they'll show you, Sir——."

"Carty, I can hear no such language against the gentleman to whom I entrust the management of my property; of course I refer the matter solely to him---I can do nothing in it."

"Kathleen, avourneen!" exclaimed the poor man,

as he looked up despairingly to heaven---" and ye, poor darlins of my heart! Is this the news I'm to have for yees whin I go home? As you hope for mercy, Sir, don't turn away your ear from my petition, that I'd humbly make to *yourself*. Cowld, and hunger, and hardship are at home before me, yer honour. If you'd be plased to look at these resates, you'd see that I always paid my rent, and 'twas sickness and the hard times——."

"And your own honesty, industry, and good conduct," said the Agent, giving a dark and malignant sneer at him. "Carthy, it shall be my business to see that you do not spread a bad spirit through the tenantry much longer. Sir, you have heard the fellow's admission. It is an implied threat that he will give us much serious trouble. There is not such another incendiary on your property---not one, upon my honour."

"Sir," said a servant, "dinner is on the table."

"Sinclair," said his landlord, "give him another crown, and tell him to trouble me no more." Saying which, he and the Agent went up to the drawing-room, and, in a moment, Owen saw a large party sweep down stairs, full of glee and vivacity, among whom both himself and his distresses were as completely forgotten as if they had never existed.

He now slowly departed, and knew not whether the house steward had given him money or not, until he felt it in his hand. A cold, sorrowful weight lay upon his heart; the din of the town deadened his affliction into a stupor; but an overwhelming sense of his disappointment, and a conviction of the Agent's diabolical falsehood, entered, like barbed arrows, into his heart.

On leaving the steps, he looked up to heaven in the distraction of his agonizing thoughts; the clouds were black and lowering; the wind stormy, and as it carried them on its dark wing along the sky, he wished, if it were the will of God, that his head lay in the quiet grave-yard where the ashes of his forefathers reposed

in peace. But he again remembered his Kathleen and their children, and the large tears of anguish, deep and bitter, rolled slowly down his cheeks.

We will not trace him into an hospital, whither the wound on his head occasioned him to be sent, but simply state, that, on the second week after this, a man with his head bound in a handkerchief, lame, bent, and evidently labouring under severe illness or great affliction, might be seen toiling slowly up the little hill that commanded a view of Tubber Derg. On reaching the top, he sat down to rest for a few minutes, but his eye was eagerly turned to the house which contained all that was dear to him on this earth. The sun was setting, and shone with half his disk visible, in that dim and cheerless splendour which produces almost in every temperament a feeling of melancholy. His house which, in happier days, formed so beautiful and conspicuous an object in the view, was now, from the darkness of its walls, scarcely discernible. The position of the sun, too, rendered it more difficult to be seen, and Owen, for it was he, shaded his eyes with his hand to survey it more distinctly. Many a harrowing thought and remembrance passed through his mind, as his eye traced its dim outline in the fading light. He had done his duty—he had gone to the fountain-head, with a hope that his simple story of affliction might be heard; but all was fruitless: the only gleam of hope that opened upon their misery had now passed into darkness and despair for ever. He pressed his aching forehead with distraction as he thought of this; then clasped his hands bitterly, and groaned aloud.

At length he rose, and proceeded with great difficulty, for the short rest had stiffened his weak and fatigued joints. As he approached home his heart sank; and as he ascended the blood-red stream which covered the bridle way that led to his house, what with fatigue and affliction, his agitation weakened him so much that he stopped, and leaned on his staff several times, that he might take breath.

"It's too dark, maybe, for them to see me, or poor Kathleen would send the darlins to give me the *she hah veha.** Kathleen, avourneen machree, how my heart beats wid long to see you, asthore, and to see the weeny crathurs—glory be to Him that has left *them* to me—praise and glory to his name!"

He was now within a few perches of the door; but a sudden misgiving shot across his heart when he saw it shut, and no appearance of smoke from they chimney, nor of stir or life about the house. He advanced—

"Mother of glory, what's this!—but, wait, let me rap agin. Kathleen—Kathleen—are you widin, avourneen? Owen—Alley—arn't yees widin, childhre? Alley, sure I'm come back to yees all!" and he rapped more loudly than before. A dark breeze swept through the bushes as he spoke, but no voice nor sound proceeded from the house; all was still as death within. "Alley!" he called once more to his little favourite; "I'm come home wid something for you, asthore; I didn't forget *you*, alanna—I brought it from Dublin all the way—Alley!" but the gloomy murmur of the blast was the only reply.

Perhaps the most intense of all that he knew as misery was that which he then felt; but this state of suspense was soon terminated by the appearance of a neighbour who was passing.

"Why, thin, Owen, but yer welcome home agin, my poor fellow; and I'm sorry that I havn't betther news for you, and so are all of us."

He whom he addressed had almost lost the power of speech:—

"Frank," said he, and he wrung his hand. "What—what? was death among them? for the sake of heaven spake!"

The severe pressure which he received in return ran like a shock of paralysis to his heart. "Owen, you must be a man; every one pities yees; and may the Almighty pity and support yees! She is, indeed,

* The welcome.

Owen, gone; the weeny fair-haired child, your favourite Alley, is gone. Yestherday she was berrid; and dacently the nabours attinded the place, and sent in, as far as they had it, both mate and dhrink to Kathleen and the other ones. Now, Owen, you've heard it; trust in God, an' be a man."

A deep and convulsive throe shook him to the heart. "Gone!—the fair-haired one!—Alley!—Alley!—the pride of both our hearts; the sweet, the quiet, and the sorrowful child, that seldom played wid the rest, but kept wid mys—! Oh, my darlin', my darlin'!—gone from my eyes for ever! God of glory! won't you support me this night of sorrow and misery!" With a sudden yet profound sense of humility, he dropped on his knees at the threshold, and, as the tears rolled down his convulsed cheeks, exclaimed, in a burst of sublime piety, not at all uncommon among our peasantry—"I thank you, O my God! I thank you, an' I put myself an' my weeny ones, my *pastchee boght*, into your hands. I thank you, O God, for what has happened! Keep me up and support me—och, I want it! You loved the weeny one, and you took her; she was the light of my eyes and the pulse of my broken heart; but you took her, blessed Father of heaven! an' we can't be angry wid you for so doin'! Still if you had spared her—if—if—oh, blessed Father, my heart was *in* the *very* one you took—but I thank you, O God! May she rest in pace, now and for ever, Amin!"

He then rose up, and slowly wiping the tears from his eyes, departed.

"Let me hould your arm, Frank, dear," said he. "I'm weak and tired wid a long journey. Och, an' can it be that she's gone—the fair-haired colleen! When I was lavin' home, an' had kissed them all—'twas the first time we ever parted, Kathleen and I, since our marriage—the blessed child came over an' held up her mouth, sayin', 'Kiss *me* agin, Father;' an' this was afther herself an' all of them had kissed me afore. But och! oh! Blessed Mother, Frank,

where's my Kathleen and the rest?—and why are they out of their own poor place?"

"Owen, I tould you awhile agone, that you must be a man. I gave you the worst news first, an' what's to come doesn't signify much. It was too dear; for if any man could live upon it you could—you have neither house nor home, Owen, nor land. An ordher came from the Agint—your last cow was taken, so was all you had in the world—hem—barrin' a thrifle. No, bad manners to it—no, you're not widout a home, any way—the family's in my barn, brave and comfortable, compared to what your own house was, that let in the wather through the roof like a sieve; and while the same barn's to the fore, never say you want a home."

"God bless you, Frank, for that goodness to them and me. If you're not rewarded for it here, you will in a betther place. Och, I long to see Kathleen and the childher! But I'm fairly broken down, Frank, and hardly able to mark the ground; and, indeed, no wondher, if you knew but all, still let God's will be done! Poor Kathleen, I must bear up afore her, or she'll break her heart, for I know how she loved the goolden-haired darlin' that's gone from us. Och, and how did she go, Frank, for I left her betther?"

"Why, the poor girsha took a relapse, and wasn't strong enough to bear up aginst the last attack; but it's one comfort that you know she's happy."

Owen stood for a moment, and looking solemnly in his neighbour's face, exclaimed, in a deep and exhausted voice—"Frank!"

"What are you goin' to say, Owen?"

"The heart widin me's broke—broke!"

The large tears rolled down his weather-beaten cheeks, and he proceeded in silence to the house of his friend. There was, however, a feeling of sorrow in his words and manner which Frank could not withstand. He grasped Owen's hand, and, in a low and broken voice, simply said—"Keep your spirits up—keep them up."

When they came to the barn in which his helpless

family had taken up their temporary residence, Owen stood for a moment to collect himself; but he was nervous, and trembled with repressed emotion. They then entered; and Kathleen, on seeing her beloved and affectionate husband, threw herself on his bosom, and for some time felt neither joy nor sorrow—she had swooned. The poor man embraced her with a tenderness at once mournful and deep. The children, on seeing their father safely returned, forgot their recent grief, and clung about him with gladness and delight. In the mean time Kathleen recovered, and Owen for many minutes could not check the loud and clamorous grief—now revived by the presence of her husband—with which the heart-broken and emaciated mother deplored her departed child; and Owen himself on once more looking among the little ones—on seeing her little frock hanging up, and her stool vacant by the fire—on missing her voice and her blue laughing eyes, and remembering the affectionate manner in which, as with a presentiment of death, she held up her little mouth and offered him the last kiss—he slowly pulled the toys and cakes he had purchased for her out of his pocket, surveyed them for a moment, and then putting his hands on his face, bent his head upon his bosom, and wept with the vehement outpourings of a father's sorrow.

The reader perceives that he was a meek man; that his passions were not dark nor violent; he bore no revenge to those who neglected or injured him, and in this he differed from too many of his countrymen. No; his spirit was broken down with sorrow, and had not room for the fiercer and more destructive passions. His case excited general pity. Whatever his neighbours could do to soothe him and alleviate his affliction was done. His farm was not taken; for fearful threats were held out against those who might venture to occupy it. In these threats he had nothing to do; on the contrary, he strongly deprecated them. Their existence, however, was deemed by the agent sufficient

to justify him in his callous and malignant severity towards him.

We did not write this story for effect. Our object was to relate facts that occurred. In Ireland there is much blame justly attached to landlords for their neglect and severity, in such depressed times, towards their tenants. There is also much that is not only indefensible but atrocious on the part of the tenants. But can the landed proprietors of Ireland plead ignorance or want of education for their neglect and rapacity, whilst the crimes of the tenants, on the contrary, may in general be ascribed to both? He who lives, as perhaps his forefathers have done, upon any man's property, and fails, from unavoidable calamity, has as just and clear a right to assistance from the landlord, as if the amount of that aid were a bonded debt. Common policy, common sense, and common justice, should induce the Irish landlords to lower their rents according to the market for agricultural produce, otherwise poverty, famine, crime, and vague political speculations, founded upon idle hopes of a general transfer of property, will spread over and convulse the kingdom. Any man who looks into our poverty, may see that our landlords ought to reduce their rents to a standard suitable to the times, and to the ability of the tenant.

But to return. Owen, for another year, struggled on for his family, without success; his firm spirit *was* broken; employment he could not get, and even had it been regular, he would have found it impracticable to support his helpless wife and children by his labour. The next year unhappily was also one of sickness and of want; the country was not only a wide waste of poverty, but overspread with typhus fever. One Saturday night he and the family found themselves without food; they had not tasted a morsel for twenty-four hours. There were murmurings and tears, and finally, a low conversation among them, as if they held a conference upon some subject which filled them with both grief and satisfaction. In this alternation of feeling did they pass the time until the sharp knawing of hun-

ger was relieved by sleep. A keen December wind blew with a bitter blast on the following morning; the rain was borne along upon it with violence, and the cold was chill and piercing. Owen, his wife, and their six children, issued at day-break out of the barn in which, ever since their removal from Tubber Derg, they had lived until then; their miserable fragments of bed-clothes were tied in a bundle to keep them dry; their pace was slow, need we say sorrowful; all were in tears. Owen and Kathleen went first, with a child upon the back, and another in the hand of each. Their route lay by their former dwelling, the door of which was open, for it had not been inhabited. On passing it they stood a moment; then with a simultaneous impulse both approached—entered—and took one last look of a spot to which their hearts clung with enduring attachment. They then returned; and as they passed, Owen put forth his hand, picked a few small pebbles out of the wall, and put them in his pocket.

"Farewell!" said he, "an' may the blessin' of God rest upon you! We now lave you for ever! We're goin' at last to beg our bread through the world wide, where none will know of the happy days we passed widin your walls! We *must* lave you; but glory be to the Almighty, we are goin' wid a clear conscience; took no revenge into our own hands, but left everything to God above us. We are poor, but there is neither blood, nor murder, nor dishonesty upon our heads. Don't cry, Kathleen—don't cry, childher; there is still a good God above, who can and may do something for us *yet*, glory be to his name!"

He then passed on with his family, which, including himself, made, in all, eight paupers, being an additional burden upon the country, which might easily have been avoided. His land was about two years waste, and when it was ultimately taken, the house was a ruin, and the money allowed by the landlord for building a new one, together with the loss of two years' rent, would, if humanely directed, have enabled Owen M'Carthy to remain a solvent tenant.

When an Irish peasant is reduced to pauperism, he seldom commences the melancholy task of soliciting alms in his native place. The trial is always a severe one, and he is anxious to hide his shame and misery from the eyes of those who know him. This is one reason why some system of poor laws should be introduced into the country. Paupers of this description become a burden upon strangers, whilst those who are capable of entering with friendly sympathy into their misfortunes have no opportunity of assisting them. Indeed this shame of seeking alms from those who have known the mendicant in better days, is a proof that the absence of poor laws takes away from the poorer classes one of the strongest incitements to industry; for instance, if every pauper in Ireland were confined to his own parish, and compelled to beg from his acquaintances, the sense of shame alone would, by stirring them up to greater industry, reduce the number of mendicants one half. There is a strong spirit of family pride in Ireland, which would be sufficient to make many poor, of both sexes, exert themselves to the uttermost, rather than cast a stain upon their name, or bring a blush to the face of their relations. But now it is not so; the mendicant sets out to beg, and in every instance commences his new mode of life in some distant part of the country, where his name and family are not known.

Indeed it is astonishing how any man can, for a moment, hesitate to form his opinion upon the subject of poor laws. The English and Scotch gentry know something about the middle and lower classes of their respective countries, and, of course, they have a fixed system of provision for the poor in each. The ignorance of the Irish gentry, upon almost every subject connected with the real good of the people, is only in keeping with their ignorance of the people themselves. It is to be feared, however, that their disinclination to introduce poor laws arises less from actual ignorance, than from an illiberal selfishness. The facts of the case are these: In Ireland the whole support of

the inconceivable multitude of paupers, who swarm like locusts over the surface of the country, rests upon the middle and lower classes, or rather upon the latter, for there is scarcely such a thing in this unhappy country as a middle class. In not one out of a thousand instances do the gentry contribute to the mendicant poor. In the first place, a vast proportion of our landlords are absentees, who squander upon their own pleasures or vices, in the theatres, saloons, or gaming-houses of France, or in the softer profligacies of Italy, that which ought to return in some shape to stand in the place of duties so shamefully neglected. These persons contribute nothing to the poor, except the various evils which their absence entails upon them.

On the other hand, the *resident* gentry never, in any case, assist a beggar, even in the remote parts of the country, where there are no mendicity institutions. Nor do the beggars ever think of applying to them. They know that his honour's dogs would be slipped at them ; or that the whip might be laid, perhaps, to the shoulders of a broken-hearted father, with his brood of helpless children wanting food ; perhaps, upon the emaciated person of a miserable widow, who begs for her orphans, only because the hands that supported, and would have defended, both her and them, are mouldered into dust.

Upon the middle and lower classes, therefore, comes *directly* the heavy burden of supporting the great mass of pauperism that presses upon Ireland. It is certain that the Irish landlords know this, and that they are reluctant to see any law enacted which might make the performance of their duties to the poor compulsory. This, indeed, is natural in men who have so inhumanly neglected them.

But what must the state of a country be where those who are on the way to pauperism themselves are exclusively burdened with the support of the vagrant poor? It is like putting additional weight on a man already sinking under the burden he bears. The landlords suppose, that because the maintenance of the

idle who are able, and of the aged and infirm who are not able to work, comes upon the renters of land, they themselves are exempted from their support. This, if true, is as bitter a stigma upon their humanity as upon their sense of justice: but it is not true. Though the cost of supporting such an incredible number of the idle and helpless does, in the first place, fall upon the tenant, yet, by diminishing his means, and by often compelling him to purchase, towards the end of the season, a portion of food equal to that which he has given away in charity, it certainly becomes ultimately a clear deduction from the landlord's rent. In either case it is a deduction, but in the latter it is often doubly so; inasmuch as the poor tenants must frequently pay, at the close of a season, double, perhaps treble, the price which provision brought at the beginning of it.

Any person conversant with the Irish people must frequently have heard such dialogues as the following, during the application of a beggar for alms:

Mendicant. "We're axin' your charity, for God's sake!"

Poor Tenant. "Whethen for his sake you would get it, poor crathur, if we had it; but it's not for you widin the four corners of the house. It 'ud be well for us if we had *now* all we gave away in charity *durin' the whole year;* we would'nt have to be buyin' for ourselves at three prices. Why don't you go up to the Big House? *They're* rich, an' can afford it."

Mendicant, with a shrug, which sets all his coats and bags in motion—"Och! och! The Big House, inagh! Musha, do you want me an' the childhre, here, to be torn to pieces wid the dogs? or lashed wid a whip by one o' the sarwints? No, no, avourneen! (with a hopeless shake of the head.) That 'ud be a blue look up, like a clear evenin'."

Poor Tenant. "Then, indeed, we haven't it to help you now, poor man. We're buyin' ourselves."

Mendicant. "Thin, throth, that's lucky, so it is! I've as purty a grain o' male here, as you'd wish to

thicken wather wid, that I sthruv to get together, in hopes to be able to buy a quarther o' tobaccy, along wid a pair o' new bades an' a scapular for myself. I'm suspicious that there's about a stone ov it altogether. You can have it anundher the market price, for I'm frettin' at not havin' the scapular an me. Sure the Lord will sind me an' the childhre a bit an' sup some way else—glory to his name!—besides a lock o' praties in the corner o' the bag here, that'll do us for this day, any way."

The bargain is immediately struck, and the poor tenant is glad to purchase, even from a beggar, his stone of meal, in consequence of getting it a few pence under market price. Such scenes as this, which are of frequent occurrence in the country parts of Ireland, need no comment.

This, certainly, is not a state of things which should be permitted to exist. Every man ought to be compelled to support the poor of his native parish according to his means. It is an indelible disgrace to the legislature so long to have neglected the paupers of Ireland. Is it to be thought of with common patience that a person rolling in wealth shall feed upon his turtle, his venison, and his costly luxuries of every description, for which he will not scruple to pay the highest price—that this heartless and selfish man, whether he reside at home or abroad, shall thus unconscionably pamper himself with viands purchased by the toil of the people, and yet not contribute to their miseries, when poverty, sickness, or age, throws them upon the scanty support of casual charity?

Shall this man be permitted to batten in luxury in a foreign land, or, at home, to whip our paupers from his carriage, or hunt them, like beasts of prey, from his grounds, whilst the lower classes—the gradually decaying poor—are compelled to groan under the burden of their support in addition to their other burdens? Surely it is not a question which admits of argument. This subject has been darkened and made difficult by fine-spun and unintelligible theories, when the only

knowledge necessary to understand it may be gained by spending a few weeks in some poor village in the interior of the country. As for Parliamentary Committees upon this or any other subject, they are, with reverence be it spoken, thoroughly contemptible. They will summon and examine witnesses who, for the most part, know little about the habits or distresses of the poor; public money will be wasted in defraying their expenses and in printing reports; resolutions will be passed; something will be said about it in the House of Commons; and, in a few weeks, after resolving and re-resolving, it is as little thought of, as if it had never been the subject of investigation. In the mean time the evil proceeds—becomes more inveterate—eats into the already declining prosperity of the country—whilst those who suffer under it have the consolation of knowing that a Parliamentary Committee sat longer upon it than so many geese upon their eggs, but hatched nothing. Two circumstances, connected with pauperism in Ireland, are worthy of notice. The first is this—the Roman Catholics, who certainly constitute the bulk of the population, feel themselves called upon, from the peculiar tenets of their religion, to exercise indiscriminate charity largely to the begging poor. They act under the impression that eleemosynary good works possess the power of cancelling sin to an extent almost incredible. Many of their religious legends are founded upon this view of the case; and the reader will find an appropriate one in the Priest's sermon, as given in our tale of the "Poor Scholar." That legend is one which the author has many a time heard from the lips of the people, by whom it was implicitly believed. A man who may have committed a murder over night, will the next day endeavour to wipe away his guilt by alms given for the purpose of getting the benefit of "the poor man's prayer." The principle of assisting our distressed fellow-creatures, when rationally exercised, is one of the best in society; but here it becomes entangled with error, superstition, and even with crime—acts as a bounty upon imposture, and in

some degree predisposes to guilt, from an erroneous belief that sin may be cancelled by alms and the prayers of mendicant impostors.

The second point, in connection with pauperism, is the immoral influence that proceeds from the relation in which the begging poor in Ireland stand towards the class by whom they are supported. These, as we have already said, are the poorest, least educated, and consequently the most ignorant description of the people. They are, also, the most numerous. There have been for centuries, probably since the Reformation itself, certain opinions floating among the lower classes in Ireland, all tending to prepare them for some great change in their favour, arising from the discomfiture of heresy, the overthrow of their enemies, and the exaltation of themselves and their religion.

Scarcely had the public mind subsided after the rebellion of ninety-eight, when the success of Bonaparte directed the eyes and the hopes of the Irish people towards *him*, as the person designed to be their deliverer. Many a fine fiction has the author of this work heard about that great man's escapes, concerning the bullets that conveniently turned aside from his person, and the sabres that civilly declined to cut him down. Many prophecies too were related, in which the glory of this country under his reign was touched off in the happiest colours. Pastorini also gave such notions an impulse. Eighteen twenty-five, was to be the year of their deliverance: George the Fourth was never to fill the British throne; and the mill of Lowth was to be turned three times with human blood. The miller with the two thumbs was then living, said the mendicants, for they were the principal propagators of these opinions, and the great expounders of their own prophecies; so that of course there could be no further doubt upon the subject. Several of them had seen him, a red-haired man with broad shoulders, stout legs, exactly as a miller ought to have, and two thumbs on his right hand; all precisely as the prophecy had stated. Then there was *Beal-derg*, and several others of the

fierce old Milesian chiefs, who along with their armies lay in an enchanted sleep, all ready to awake and take a part in the delivery of the country. "Sure such a man," and they would name him, in the time of the mendicant's grandfather, "was once going to fair to sell a horse—well and good; the time was the dawn of morning, a little before daylight: he met a man who undertook to purchase his horse; they agreed upon the price, and the seller of him followed the buyer into a Rath, where he found a range of horses, each with an armed soldier asleep by his side, ready to spring upon him if awoke. The purchaser cautioned the owner of the horse, as they were about to enter the subterraneous dwelling against touching either horse or man; but the countryman happening to stumble, inadvertently laid his hand upon a sleeping soldier, who immediately leaped up, drew his sword, and asked "*wuil anam inh?*" Is the time in it? Is the time arrived? To which the horse-dealer of the Rath replied, "*Ha niel. Gho dhee callhow areesht.*" No; go to sleep again." Upon this, the soldier immediately sank down in his former position, and unbroken sleep reigned throughout the cave. The influence on the warm imaginations of ignorant people, of the fictions concocted by vagrant mendicants is very pernicious. They fill their minds with the most palpable absurdities, and, what is worse, with opinions, which, along with being injurious to those who receive them, in every instance insure for those who propagate them a cordial and kind reception.

These mendicants consequently pander, for their own selfish ends, to the prejudices of the ignorant, which they nourish and draw out in a manner that has in no slight degree been subversive of the peace of the country. Scarcely any political circumstance occurs which they do not immediately seize upon and twist to their own purposes, or in other words, to the opinions of those from whom they derive their support. When our present police first appeared in their uniforms and black belts, another prophecy, forsooth, was

fulfilled. Immediately before the downfall of heresy, a body of "Black Militia" was to appear. The police then are the black militia, and the people consider themselves another step nearer the consummation of their vague speculations.

In the year ninety-eight, the Irish mendicants were active agents, clever spies, and expert messengers on the part of the people; and to this day, they carry falsehood and the materials of outrage in its worst shape, into the bosom of peaceable families, who would, otherwise, never become connected with a system which is calculated to bring nothing but ruin and destruction upon those who permit themselves to join it.

This evil, and it is no small one, would, by the introduction of poor-laws, be utterly abolished; the people would not only be more easily improved by purer knowledge; but education, when received, would not be corrupted by the infusion into it of such ingredients as the above. In many other points of view the confirmed and hacknied mendicants of Ireland, are a great evil to the morals of the people. We could easily detail them, but such not being our object at present, we will now dismiss the subject of poor-laws, and resume our narrative.

Far—far different from this description of impostors, were Owen M'Carthy and his family. Their misfortunes were not the consequences of negligence or misconduct on their own part. They struggled long but unavailingly against high rents and low markets; against neglect on the part of the landlord and his agent; against sickness, famine, and death. They had no alternative but to beg or starve. Owen was willing to work, but he could not procure employment, and provided he could, the miserable sum of sixpence a day, when food was scarce and dear, would not support him, his wife, and six little ones. He became a pauper, therefore, only to avoid starvation.

Heavy and black was his heart, to use the strong expression of the people, on the bitter morning when he set out to encounter the dismal task of seeking

alms in order to keep life in himself and his family. The plan was devised on the preceding night; but to no mortal, except his wife, was it communicated. The honest pride of a man whose mind was above committing a mean action, would not permit him to reveal what he considered the first stain that ever was known to rest upon the name of M'Carthy. He therefore sallied out under the beating of the storm, and proceeded, without caring much whither he went, until he got considerably beyond the bounds of his own parish.

In the mean time hunger pressed keenly upon him and them. The day had no appearance of clearing up; the heavy rain and sleet beat into their thin, worn garments, and the clamour of his children for food, began to grow more and more importunate. They came to the shelter of a hedge which enclosed on one side a remote and broken road, along which, in order to avoid the risk of being recognized, they had preferred travelling. Owen stood here for a few minutes to consult with his wife, as to where and when they should "make a beginning;" but on looking round he found her in tears.

"Kathleen, asthore," said he, "I can't bid you not to cry; bear up, acushla machree; bear up: sure, as I said when we came out this mornin', there's a good God above us, that can still turn over the good lafe for us, if we put our hopes in him."

"Owen," said his sinking wife; "it's not altogether bekase we're brought to this, that I'm cryin. No indeed."

"Thin what ails you, Kathleen, darlin?"

The wife hesitated, and evaded the question for some time; but at length upon his pressing her for an answer, with a fresh gush of sorrow, she replied,

"Owen, since you *must* know—och, may God pity us!—since you must know, its wid hunger—*wid hunger!* I kept, unknownst, a little bit of bread to give the childre this mornin', an' that was part of it I gave you yesterday early—I'm near two days fastin."

"Kathleen! Kathleen! Och! sure I know your worth, avillish. You were too good a wife, an' too good a mother, amost! God forgive me, Kathleen! I fretted about beggin', dear; but as my heavenly Father's above me, I'm now happier to beg wid you by my side, nor if I war in the best house in the province widout you! Hould up, avourneen, for awhile. Come on, childhre, darlins, an' the first house we meet we'll ax their char——, their assistance. Come, on, darlins, all of yees. Why my heart's asier, so it is. Sure we have your mother, childhre, safe wid us, an' what signifies anything so long as *she's* left to us."

He then raised his wife tenderly, for she had been compelled to sit from weakness, and they bent their steps to a decent farm-house, that stood a few perches off the road, about a quarter of a mile before them.

As they approached the door, the husband hesitated a moment; his face got paler than usual, and his lip quivered, as he said—"Kathleen—"

"I know what you're goin' to say, Owen. No, acushla, *you* won't; *I'll* ax it myself."

"Do," said Owen, with difficulty; "I can't do it; but I'll overcome my pride afore long, I hope. It's thryin' to me, Kathleen, an' you know it is—for you know how little I ever expected to be brought to this."

"Husht, avillish! We'll thry, then, in the name o' God."

As she spoke, the children, herself, and her husband, entered, to beg for the first time in their lives a morsel of food. Yes! timidly—with a blush of shame, red even to crimson, upon the pallid features of Kathleen—with grief acute and piercing—they entered the house together.

For some minutes they stood and spoke not. The unhappy woman, unaccustomed to the language of supplication, scarcely knew in what terms to crave assistance. Owen, himself, stood back, uncovered, his fine but much changed features overcast with an expression of deep affliction. Kathleen cast a single glance at

him as if for encouragement. Their eyes met; she saw the upright man—the last remnant of the M'Carthy—himself once the friend of the poor, of the unhappy, of the afflicted—standing crushed and broken down by misfortunes which he had not deserved, waiting with patience for a morsel of charity. Owen, too, had *his* remembrances. He recollected the days when he sought and gained the pure and fond affections of his Kathleen; when beauty, and youth, and innocence encircled her with their light and their grace, as she spoke or moved; he saw her a happy wife and mother in her own home, kind and benevolent to all who required her good word or her good office; and now she was homeless. He remembered, too, how she used to plead with himself for the afflicted. It was but a moment; yet when their eyes met, that moment was crowded by remembrances that flashed across their minds with a keen sense of a lot so bitter and wretched as theirs. Kathleen could not speak, although she tried; her sobs denied her utterance, and Owen involuntarily sat upon a chair, and covered his face with his hand.

To an observing eye it is never difficult to detect the cant of imposture, or to perceive distress when it is real. The good woman of the house, as is usual in Ireland, was in the act of approaching them, unsolicited, with a double handful of meal—that is what the Scotch and northern Irish call a *gowpen*—or as much as both hands locked together can contain—when, noticing their distress, she paused a moment, eyed them more closely, and exclaimed—

"What's this? Why there's something wrong wid you, good people! But first an' foremost, take this, in the name an' honour o' God."

"May the blessin' of the same Man* rest upon yees!" replied Kathleen. "This is a sorrowful thrial

* God is thus sometimes termed in Ireland. By "Man" here is meant person or being. He is also called the "Man above;" although this must have been intended for, and often is applied to, Christ only.

to us; for it's our first day to be upon the world; an' this is the first help of the kind we ever axed for, or ever got; an' indeed now I find we haven't even a place to carry it in. I've no b—b—cloth, or anything to hould it."

"Your first, is it?" said the good woman. "Your first! May the marciful queen o' heaven look down upon yees, but it's a bitther day yees was driven out on! Sit down, there, you poor crathur. God pity you, I pray this day, for you *have* a heart-broken look! Sit down awhile, near the fire, you an' the childhre! Come over, darlins, an' warm yourselves! Och, oh! but it's the thousand pities to see sich fine childhre—handsome an' good lookin', even as they are, brought to this! Come over, good man; get near the fire, for you're wet an' could all of yees. Brian, *ludher* them two lazy thieves o' dogs out o' that. *Eiree suas, a wadhee bradagh, agus go mah a shin!* —be off wid yees, ye lazy divils, that's not worth you feedin'! Come over, honest man."

Owen and his family were placed near the fire; the poor man's heart was full, and he sighed heavily.

"May he that it plased to thry us," he exclaimed, "reward you for this! We are," he continued, "a poor an' a sufferin' family; but it's the will of God that we should be so, an' sure we can't complain widout committin' sin. All we ax now is, that it may be plasin' to him that brought us low, to enable us to bear up undher our thrials. We would take it to our choice to beg an' be honest, sooner nor be wealthy an' wicked! We have our failins an' our sins, God help us; but still there's nothin' dark or heavy on our consciences. Glory be to the name o' God for it!"

"Throth, I believe you," replied the farmer's wife; "there's thruth and honesty in your face; one may easily see the remains of dacency about yees all. Musha, throw your little things aside, an' stay where yees are to-day: you can't bring out the childhre undher the teem of rain an' sleet that's in it. Wurrah dheelish, but it's the bitther day all out! Faix, Paddy

will get a dhrookin, so he will, at that weary fair wid the stirks, poor bouchal—a son of ours that's gone to Ballyboulteen to sell some cattle, an' he'll not be worth three hapuns afore he comes back. I hope he'll have sinse to go into some house, when he's done, an' dhry himself well, any how, besides takin' somethin' to keep out the could. Put by your things, an' don't think of goin' out sich a day."

"We thank you," replied Owen. "Indeed we're glad to stay undher your roof; for, poor things, they're badly able to thravel sich a day—these childhre."

"Musha, yees ate no breakfast, maybe?"

Owen and his family were silent. The children looked wistfully at their parents, anxious that they should confirm what the good woman surmised; the father looked again at his famished brood and his sinking wife, and nature overcame him.

"Food did not crass our lips this day," replied Owen; "an' I may say hardly anything yesterday."

"Oh, blessed mother! Here, Katty Murray, drop scrubbin' that dresser, an' put down the midlin' pot for stirabout. Be livin'! *manim an dioul*, woman alive, handle yourself; you might a had it boilin' by this. God presarve us!—to be two days widout atin! Be the crass Katty, if you're not alive, I'll give you a douse o' the churnstaff that'll bring the fire to your eyes! Do you hear me?"

"I do hear you, an' did often feel you, too, for fraid hearin' would'nt do. You think there's no places in the world but your own, I b'lieve. Faix, indeed! It's well come up wid us, to be randied about wid no less a switch than a churnstaff!"

"Is it givin' back talk you are? Bad end to me, if you look crucked but I'll lave you a mark to remimber me by. What woman 'ud put up wid you but myself, you shkamin' flipe? It wasn't to give me your bad tongue I hired you, but to do your business; an' by the crass above us, if you turn your tongue on me agin, I'll give you the weight o' the churnstaff. Is

it bekase they're poor people that it plased God to bring to this, that you turn up your nose at doin' anything to sarve them? There's not wather enough there, I say—put in more. What signifies all the stirabout that 'ud make? Put plinty in; its betther always to have too much than too little. Faix, I tell you, you'll want a male's meat an' a night's lodgin' afore you die, if you don't mend your manners."

"Och, musha, the poor girl is doin' her best," observed Kathleen; "an' I'm sure she would'nt be guilty of usin' pride to the likes of us, or to any one that the Lord has laid his hand upon."

"She had betther not, while I'm to the fore," said her mistress. "What is she herself? Sure if it was a sin to be poor, God help the world. No; it's neither a sin nor a shame."

"Thanks be to God, no," said Owen; "it's neither the one nor the other. So long as we keep a fair name, an' a clear conscience, we can't ever say that our case is hard."

After some further conversation a comfortable breakfast was prepared for them, of which they partook with an appetite sharpened by their long abstinence from food. Their stay here was particularly fortunate, for as they were certain of a cordial welcome, and an abundance of that which they much wanted—wholesome food—the pressure of immediate distress was removed. They had time to think more accurately upon the little preparations for misery which were necessary, and, as the day's leisure was at their disposal, Kathleen's needle and scissors were industriously plied in mending the tattered clothes of her husband and her children, in order to meet the inclemency of the weather.

On the following morning, after another abundant breakfast, and substantial marks of kindness from their entertainers, they prepared to resume their new and melancholy mode of life. As they were about to depart, the farmer's wife addressed them in the follow-

ing terms—the farmer himself, by the way, being but the shadow of his worthy partner in life.

Wife. "Now, good people, you're takin' the world on your heads"——

Farmer. "Ay, good people, you're takin' the world on your heads"——

Wife. "Hould your tongue, Brian, an' suck your dudeen. It's me that's spakin' to them, so none of your palaver, if you plase, till I'm done, an' then you may prache till Tib's Eve, and that's neither before Christmas nor afther it."

Farmer. "Sure I'm sayin' nothin', Evleen, barrin' houldin' my tongue, *a shuchar.*"*

Wife. "You're takin' the world on yees, an' God knows 'tis a heavy load to carry, poor crathurs."

Farmer. "A heavy load, poor crathurs! God he knows it's that!"

Wife. "Brian! *Gluntho ma?*—did you hear me? You'll be puttin' in your gab, an' me spakin'? How-an'-diver, as I was sayin', our house was the first yees came to, an' they say there's a great blessin' to thim that gives the *first* charity to a poor man or woman settin' out to look for their bit."

Farmer. "Throgs, ay! Whin they set out to look for their bit."

Wife. "By the crass, Brian, you'd vex a saint. What have you to say in it, you *pittiogue?* Hould your whisht now, an' suck your dudeen, I say; sure I allow you a quarther o' tobaccy a week, an' what right have you to be puttin' in your gosther when other people's spakin'?"

Farmer. "Go an."

Wife. "So, you see, the long an' the short of it is, that whenever you happen to be in this side of the counthry, always come to *us.* You know the ould sayin'—when the poor man comes he brings a blessin', an' whin he goes he carries away a curse. You have

* My sugar.

as much meal as will last yees a day or two; an' God he sees you're heartily welcome to all yees got!"

Farmer. "God he sees you're heartily welcome——"

Wife. "*Chorp an diouol,* Brian, hould your tongue, or I'll turn you out o' the kitchen. One can't hear their own ears for you, you poor squakin' dhrone. By the crass I'll—eh? Will you whisht now!"

Farmer. "Go an. Amn't I dhrawin' my pipe?"

Wife. "Well dhraw *it;* but don't dhraw *me* down upon you, barrin—— Do you hear me? an' the sthrange people to the fore, too! Well, the Lord be wid yees, an' bless yees! But afore yees go, jist lave your blessin' wid us; for it's a good thing to have the blessin' of the poor."

"The Lord bless you an' yours!" said Owen, fervently. "May you an' them never—oh, may you never—*never* suffer what we've suffered; nor know what it is to want a male's mate or a night's lodgin'!"

"Amin!" exclaimed Kathleen; "may the world flow upon you! for your good kind heart desarves it."

Farmer. "An' whisper; I wish you'd offer up a prayer for the rulin' o' the tongue. The Lord might hear *you,* but there's no great hopes that ever he'll hear *me;* dhough I've prayed for it almost ever since I was married, night an' day, winther an' summer; but no use, she's as bad as ever."

This was in a kind of friendly insinuating undertone to Owen; who, on hearing it, simply nodded his head, but made no other reply.

They then recommenced their journey, after having once more blessed, and been invited by, their charitable entertainers, who made them promise never to pass their house without stopping a night with them.

It is not our intention to trace Owen M'Carthy and his wife through all the variety which a wandering pauper's life affords. He never could reconcile himself to the habits of a mendicant. His honest pride and integrity of heart raised him above it; neither did he sink into the whine and cant of imposture, nor the

slang of knavery. No; there was a touch of manly sorrow about him, which neither time, nor familiarity with his degraded mode of life, could take away from him. His usual observation to his wife, and he never made it without a pang of intense bitterness, was—"Kathleen, darlin', it's thrue we have enough to ate an' to dhrink; but *we have no home!—no home!*" To a man like him it was a thought of surpassing bitterness, indeed.

"Ah! Kathleen," he would observe, "if we had but the poorest shed that could be built, provided it was *our own*, wouldn't we be happy? The bread we ate, avourneen, doesn't do us good. We don't work for it; it's the bread of shame and idleness: and yet it's Owen M'Carthy that ates it! But, avourneen, that's past; an' we'll never see our own home, or our own hearth agin. That's what's cuttin' into my heart, Kathleen. Never!—never!"

Many a trial, too, of another kind was his patience called upon to sustain; particularly from the wealthy and the more elevated in life, when his inexperience as a mendicant led him to solicit their assistance.

"Begone, Sirrah, off my grounds!" one would say. "Why don't you work, you sturdy impostor," another would exclaim, "rather than stroll about lazily, training your brats to the gallows?" "You should be taken up, fellow, as a vagrant," a third would observe; "and if I ever catch you coming up my avenue again, depend upon it, I will slip my dogs at you and your idle spawn."

Owen, on these occasions, turned away in silence: he did not curse them; but the pangs of his honest heart went before Him who will, sooner or later, visit upon the heads of such men their cruel spurning and neglect of the poor.

"Kathleen," he observed to his wife, one day, about a year or more after they had begun to beg; "Kathleen, I have been turnin' it in my mind, that some of these childhre might sthrive to earn their bit an' sup, an' their little coverin' of clo'es, poor things. We

might put them to herd cows in the summer, an' the *girshas* to somethin' else in the farmer's houses. What do you think, asthore?"

"For God's sake do, Owen; sure my heart's crushed to see them—my own childhre, that I could lay down my life for—beggin from door to door. Och, do something for them that way, Owen, an' you'll relieve the heart that loves them. It's a sore sight to a mother's eye, Owen, to see her childhre beggin their morsel."

"It is darlin—it is; we'll hire out the three eldest, —Brian an' Owen, an' Pether, to herd cows; an' we may get Peggy into some farmer's house to do loose jobs an' run of messages. Then we'd have only little Kathleen an' poor Ned along wid us. I'll thry any way, an' if I can get them places, who knows what may happen? I have a plan in my head that I'll tell you, thin."

"Arrah, what is it, Owen jewel? Sure if I know it, maybe when I'm sorrowful, that thinkin' of it, an' lookin' forrid to it will make me happier. An' I'm sure, acuhsla, you would like that."

"But, maybe, Kathleen, if it wouldn't come to pass, that the disappointment 'ud be heavy on you?"

"How could it, Owen? Sure we can't be worse nor we are, whatever happens?"

"Thrue enough indeed, I forgot that; an' yet we might, Kathleen. Sure we'd be worse, if we or the childhre had bad health."

"God forgive me thin, for what I said! We might be worse. Well, but what is the plan, Owen?"

"Why, when we get the childre places, I'll sthrive to take a little house, an' work as a cottar. Then, Kathleen, '*we'd have a home of our own.*' I'd work from light to light; I'd work before hours an' afther hours; ay, nine days in the week, or we'd be comfortable in our own little home. We might be poor, Kathleen, I know that, an' hard pressed, too; but then, as I said, we'd have our own home, an' our own hearth; our morsel, if it ud' be homely, would be sweet, for it would be the fruits of our own labour."

"Now, Owen, do you think you could manage to get that?"

"Wait, acushla, till we get the childhre settled. Then I'll thry the other plan, for its good to thry anything that would take us out of this disgraceful life."

This humble speculation was a source of great comfort to them. Many a time have they forgotten their sorrows in contemplating the simple picture of their happy little cottage. Kathleen, in particular, drew with all the vivid colouring of a tender mother, and an affectionate wife, the various sources of comfort and contentment to be found even in a cabin, whose inmates are blessed with a love of independence, industry, and mutual affection.

Owen, in pursuance of his intention, did not neglect, when the proper season arrived, to place out his eldest children among the farmers. The reader need not be told that there was that about him which gained respect. He had, therefore, little trouble in obtaining his wishes on this point, and to his great satisfaction, he saw three of them hired out to earn their own support.

It was now a matter of some difficulty for him to take a cabin and get employment. They had not a single article of furniture, and neither bed nor bedding, with the exception of blankets almost worn past use. He was resolved, however, to give up, at all risks, the life of a mendicant. For this purpose, he and the wife agreed to adopt a plan quite usual in Ireland, under circumstances somewhat different from his: this was, that Kathleen should continue to beg for their support, until the first half-year of their children's service should expire; and in the mean time, that he, if possible, should secure employment for himself. By this means, his earnings, and that of his children, might remain untouched, so that in half a year, he calculated upon being able to furnish a cabin, and proceed, as a cottier, to work for, and support his young children and his wife, who determined, on her part, not to be

idle any more than her husband. As the plan was a likely one, and as Owen was bent on earning his bread, rather than be a burden to others, it is unnecessary to say that it succeeded. In less than a year he found himself once more in a home, and the force of what he felt on sitting for the first time since his pauperism, at his own hearth, may easily be conceived by the reader. For some years after this, Owen got on slowly enough; his wages as a daily labourer, being so miserable, that it required him to exert every nerve to keep the house over their heads. What, however, will not carefulness and a virtuous determination, joined to indefatigable industry, do?

After some time, backed as he was by his wife, and even by his youngest children, he found himself beginning to improve. In the mornings and the evenings he cultivated his garden and his rood of potatoe-ground. He also collected with a wheelbarrow, which he borrowed from an acquaintance, compost from the neighbouring road; scoured an old drain before his door; dug rich earth, and tossed it into the pool of rotten water beside the house, and in fact, adopted several other modes of collecting manure. By this means, he had, each spring, a large portion of rich stuff on which to plant his potatoes. His landlord permitted him to spread this for planting upon his land; and Owen, ere long, instead of a rood, was able to plant half an acre, and ultimately, an acre of potatoes. The produce of this, being more than sufficient for the consumption of his family, he sold the surplus, and with the money gained by the sale, was enabled to sow half an acre of oats, of which, when made into meal, he disposed of the greater share.

Industry is capital; for even when unaided by capital it creates it; whereas, idleness with capital, produces only poverty and ruin. Owen after selling his meal and as much potatoes as he could spare, found himself able to purchase a cow. Here was means of making more manure; he had his cow, and he had also straw enough for her provender during the winter.

The cow by affording milk to his family, enabled them to live more cheaply; her butter they sold, and this in addition to his surplus meal and potatoes every year, soon made him feel that he had a few guineas to spare. He now bethought him of another mode of helping himself forward in the world: after buying the best "slip" of a pig he could find, a stye was built for her, and ere long he saw a fine litter of young pigs within a snug shed. These he reared until they were about two months old, when he sold them, and found that he had considerably gained by the transaction. This department, however, was under the management of Kathleen, whose life was one of incessant activity, and employment. Owen's children, during the period of his struggles and improvements, were, by his advice, multiplying *their* little capital as fast as himself. The two boys, who had now shot up into the stature of young men, were at work as labouring servants in the neighbourhood. The daughters were also engaged as servants with the adjoining farmers. The boys bought each a pair of two-year-old heifers, and the daughter one. These they sent to graze up in the mountains at a trifling charge, for the first year or two: when they became springers, they put them to rich infield grass for a few months, until they got a marketable appearance, after which their father brought them to the neighbouring fairs, where they usually sold to great advantage, in consequence of the small outlay required in rearing them.

In fact, the principle of industry ran through the family. There was none of them idle; none of them a burden or a check upon the profits made by the labourer. On the contrary, "they laid their shoulders together," as the phrase is, and proved to the world, that when the proper disposition is followed up by suitable energy and perseverance, it must generally reward him who possesses it.

It is certainly true that Owen's situation in life *now* was essentially different from that which it had been during the latter years of his struggles *as a farmer*.

It was much more favourable, and far better calculated to develope successful exertion. If there be a class of men deserving public sympathy, it is that of the small farmers of Ireland. Their circumstances are fraught with all that is calculated to depress and ruin them; rents far above their ability, increasing poverty, and bad markets. The land, which during the last war, might have enabled the renter to pay three pounds per acre, and yet still maintain himself with tolerable comfort, could not now pay more than one pound, or at the most, one pound ten; and yet, such is the infatuation of landlords, that, in most instances, the terms of leases taken out then are rigorously exacted. Neither can the remission of yearly arrears be said to strike at the root of the evils under which they suffer. The fact of the disproportionate rent hanging over them, is a disheartening circumstance, that paralyzes their exertion, and sinks their spirits. If the landlord remit the rent for one term, he deals more harshly with the tenant at the next: whatever surplus, if any, his former indulgence leaves in the tenant's hands, instead of being expended upon his property as capital, and being permitted to lay the foundation of hope and prosperity, is drawn from him at next term, and the poor, struggling tenant is thrown back into as much distress, embarrassment, and despondency as ever. There are, I believe, few tenants in Ireland of the class I allude to, who are not from one gale to three in arrear. Now, how can it be expected, that such men will labour with spirit and earnestness to raise crops which they may never reap? crops which the landlord may seize upon to secure as much of his rent as he can.

We have known a case in which the arrears were not only remitted, but the rent lowered to a reasonable standard, such as, considering the markets, could be paid. And what was the consequence? The tenant, who was looked upon as a negligent man, from whom scarcely any rent could be got, took courage, worked his farm with a spirit and success which he had not evinced before; and ere long, was in a capacity to pay

his gales to the very day; so that the judicious and humane landlord, was finally a gainer by his own excellent economy. This was an experiment, and it succeeded beyond expectation.

Owen M'Carthy did not work with more zeal and ability as an humble cottier, than he did, when a farmer; but, the tide was against him as a land-holder, and instead of having advanced, he actually lost ground until he became a pauper. No doubt, the peculiarly unfavourable run of two hard seasons, darkened by sickness and famine, were formidable obstacles to him; but he must eventually have failed, even had they not occurred. They accelerated his downfall, but did not cause it.

The Irish people, though poor, are exceedingly anxious to be independent. Their highest ambition is to hold a farm. So strong is this principle in them, that they will, without a single penny of capital, or any visible means to rely on, without consideration or forethought, come forward and offer a rent, which, if they reflected only for a moment, they must feel to be unreasonably high. This, indeed, is a great evil in Ireland. But what, in the meantime, must we think of those imprudent landlords, and their more imprudent agents, who let their land to such persons, without proper inquiry into their means, knowledge of agriculture, and general character as moral and industrious men. A farm of land is to be let; it is advertised through the parish; application is to be made before such a day, to so and so. The day arrives, the agent or the landsteward looks over the proposals, and after singling out the highest bidder, declares him tenant, as a matter of course. Now, perhaps, this said tenant does not possess a shilling in the world, nor a shilling's worth. Most likely he is a new married man, with nothing but his wife's bed and bedding, his wedding suit, and his black-thorn cudgel, which we may suppose him to keep in reserve for the bailiff. However, he commences his farm; and then follow the shiftings, the scramblings, and the fruitless strug-

gles to succeed where success is impossible. His farm is not half tilled; his crops are miserable; the gale day has already passed; yet, he can pay nothing until he takes it out of the land. Perhaps he runs away—makes a moonlight flitting—and, by the aid of his friends, succeeds in bringing the crop with him. The landlord, or agent, declares he is a knave; forgetting that the man had no other alternative, and that they were the greater knaves and fools too, for encouraging him to undertake a task that was beyond his strength.

In calamity we are anxious to derive support from the sympathy of our friends; in our success we are eager to communicate to them the power of participating in our happiness. When Owen once more found himself independent and safe, he longed to realize two plans on which he had for some time before been seriously thinking. The first was to visit his former neighbours, that they might at length know that Owen M'Carthy's station in the world was such as became his character. The second was, if possible, to take a farm in his native parish, that he might close his days among the companions of his youth, and the friends of his maturer years. He had, also, another motive; there lay the burying-place of the M'Carthy's, in which slept the mouldering dust of his own "golden haired" Alley. With them,—in his daughter's grave—he intended to sleep his long sleep. Affection for the dead is the memory of the heart. In no other grave-yard could he reconcile it to himself to be buried; to it had all his forefathers been gathered; and though calamity had separated him from the scenes where they had passed through existence, yet he was resolved that death should not deprive him of its melancholy consolation;—that of reposing with all that remained of the "departed," who had loved him, and whom he had loved. He believed, that to neglect this, would be to abandon a sacred duty, and felt sorrow at the thought of being like an absent guest from the assembly of *his own* dead; for there is a principle of undying hope in the heart, that carries, with bold

and beautiful imagery, the realities of life into the silent recesses of death itself.

Having formed the resolution of visiting his old friends at Tubber Derg, he communicated it to Kathleen and his family; his wife received the intelligence with undisguised delight.

"Owen," she replied, "indeed I'm glad you mintioned it. Many a time the thoughts of our place, an' the people about it, comes over me. I know, Owen, it'll go to your heart to see it; but still, avourneen, you'd like, too, to see the ould faces an' the warm hearts of them that pitied us, an' helped us, as well as they could, whin we war broken down."

"I would, Kathleen; but I'm not goin' merely to see thim an' the place. I intind, if I can, to take a bit of land somewhere near Tubber Derg. I'm unasy in my mind, for fraid I'd not sleep in the grave-yard where all belongin' to me lie."

A cord of the mother's heart was touched; and in a moment the memory of their beloved child brought the tears to her eyes.

"Owen, avourneen, I have one requist to ax of you, an' I'm sure you won't refuse it to me: if I die afore you, let me buried wid Alley. Who has a right to sleep so near her as her own mother?"

"The child's in my heart still," said Owen, suppressing his emotion; "thinkin' of the unfortunate mornin' I wint to Dublin, brings her back to me. I see her standin', wid her fair pale face—pale—oh, my God!—wid hunger an' sickness—her little thin clo'es, an' her goolden hair, tossed about by the dark blast—the tears in her eyes, an' the smile, that she once had, on her face—houldin' up her mouth, an' sayin', 'Kiss *me* agin, father;' as if she knew, somehow, that I'd never see her, nor her me, any more. An' whin I looked back, as I was turnin' the corner, there she stood, strainin' her eyes afther her father, that she was then takin' the last sight of until the judgment day!"

His voice here became broken, and he sat in silence for a few minutes.

"It's sthrange," he added, with more firmness, "how she's so often in my mind!"

"But, Owen dear," replied Kathleen, "sure it was the will of God that she should lave us. She's now a bright angel in heaven, an' I dunna if it's right—indeed, I doubt it's sinful for us to think so much about her. Who knows but her innocent spirit is makin' inthercession for us all, before the blessed Mother o' God! Who knows but it was her that got us the good fortune that flowed in upon us, an' that made our strugglin' an' our labourin' turn out so *lucky!*"

The idea of being *lucky* or *unlucky* is, in Ireland, an enemy to industry. It is certainly better that the people should believe success in life to be, as it is, the result of virtuous exertion, than of contingent circumstances, over which they themselves have no control. Still there was something beautiful in the superstition of Kathleen's affections; something that touched the heart and its dearest associations.

"It's very true, Kathleen," replied her husband; "but God is ever ready to help them that keeps an honest heart, an' do everything in their power to live creditably. They may fail for a time, or he may thry them for awhile, but sooner or later good intintions and honest labour will be rewarded. Look at ourselves—blessed be his name!"

"But whin do you mane to go to Tubber Derg, Owen?"

"In the beginnin' of the next week. An' Kathleen, ahagur, if you remimber the bitther mornin' we came upon the world—but we'll not be spakin' of that now. I don't like to think of it. Some other time, maybe, when we're settled among our ould friends, I'll mintion it."

"Well, the Lord bliss your endayvours, any how! Och, Owen, do thry an' get a snug farm somewhere near them. But you didn't answer me about Alley, Owen?"

"Why, you must have your wish, Kathleen, although I intended to keep that place for myself. Still

we can sleep one on aich side of her; an' that may be asily done, for our buryin' ground is large: so set your mind at rest on that head. I hope God won't call us till we see our childhre settled dacently in the world. But, sure, at all evints, let his blessed will be done!"

"Amin! amin! It's not right of any one to keep their hearts fixed too much upon the world; nor even, they say, upon one's own childhre."

"People may love their childhre as much as they plase, Kathleen, if they don't let their *grah* for them spoil the crathurs, by givin' them their own will, till they become headstrong an' overbearin'. Now, let my linen be as white as a bone before Monday, plase goodness; I hope, by that time, that Jack Dogherty will have my new clo'es made; for I intind to go as dacent as ever they seen me in my best days."

"An' so you will, too, avillish. Throth, Owen, it's you that'll be the proud man, steppin' in to them in all your grandeur! Ha, ha, ha! The spirit o' the M'Carthys is in you still, Owen."

"Ha, ha! ha! It is, darlin'; it is, indeed; an' I'd be sarry it wasn't. I long to see poor Widow Murray. I dunna is her son, Jemmy, married. Who knows, afther all we suffered, but I might be able to help her yet?—that is, if shé stands in need of it. But, I suppose her childhre's grown up now, an' able to assist her. Now, Kathleen, mind Monday next; an' have everything ready. I'll stay away a week or so, at the most, an' afther that I'll have news for you about all o' them."

When Monday morning arrived, Owen found himself ready to set out for Tubber Derg. The tailor had not disappointed him; and Kathleen, to do her justice, took care that the proofs of her good housewifery should be apparent in the whiteness of his linen. After breakfast, he dressed himself in all his finery; and it would be difficult to say whether the harmless vanity that peeped out occasionally from his simplicity of character, or the open and undisguised triumph of

his faithful wife, whose eye rested on him with pride and affection, was most calculated to produce a smile.

"Now, Kathleen," said he, when preparing for his immediate departure, "I'm thinkin' of what they'll say, when they see me so smooth an' warm lookin'. I'll engage they'll be axin one another, 'Musha, how did Owen M'Carthy get an, at all, to be so well to do in the world, as he appears to be, afther failin' on his ould farm?'"

"Well, but Owen, you know how to manage them."

"Throth, I do that. But there's *one* thing they'll never get out o' me, any way."

"You won't tell *that* to any o' them, Owen?"

"Kathleen, if I thought they only suspected it, I'd never show my face in Tubber Derg agin. I think I could bear to be—an' yet it 'ud be a hard struggle wid me, too—but I *think* I could bear to be buried among black strangers, rather than it should be said, over my grave, among my own, 'there's where Owen M'Carthy lies—who was the only man, of his name, that ever begged his morsel on the king's highway. There he lies, the descindant of the great M'Carthy Mores, an' yet he was a beggar.' I know, Kathleen achora, it's neither a sin nor a shame to ax one's bit from our fellow-creatures, whin fairly brought to it, widout any fault of our own; but still I feel something in me, that can't bear to think of it widout shame an' heaviness of heart."

"Well, it's one comfort, that nobody knows it but ourselves. The poor childhre, for their own sakes, won't ever breathe it; so that it's likely the secret 'ill be berrid wid us."

"I hope so, acushla. Does this coat sit asy atween the shoulders? I feel it catch me a little."

"The sorra nicer. There; it was only your waistcoat that was turned down in the collar. Here—hould your arm. There now—it wanted to be pulled down a little at the cuffs. Owen, it's a beauty; an' I think

I have good right to be proud out of it, for it's every thread my own spinnin'."

"How do I look in it, Kathleen? Tell me thruth, now."

"Throth, you're twinty years younger; the never a day less."

"I think I needn't be ashamed to go afore my ould friends in it, any way. Now bring me my staff, from undher the bed above; an', in the name o' God, I'll set out."

"Which o' them, Owen? Is it the oak or the blackthorn?"

"The oak, acushla. Oh, no; not the blackthorn. It's it that I brought to Dublin wid me, the unlucky thief, an' that I had while we wor *a shaughran.* Divil a one o' me but 'ud blush in the face, if I brought it even in my hand afore them. The oak, ahagur; the oak. You'll get it atween the foot o' the bed an' the wall."

When Kathleen placed the staff in his hand, he took off his hat and blessed himself, then put it on, looked at his wife, and said—"now darlin', in the name o' God, I'll go. Hushth, avillish machree, don't be cryin'; sure I'll be back to you in a week."

"Och! I can't help it, Owen. Sure this is the second time you war ever away from me more nor a day; an' I'm thinkin' o' what happened, both to you an' me, the *first* time you wint. Owen, acushla, I feel that if anything happened to you, I'd break my heart."

"Arrah, what 'ud happen me, darlin', wid God to protect me? Now, God be wid you, Kathleen dheelish, till I come back to you wid good news, I hope. I'm not goin' in sickness an' misery, as I wint afore, to see a man that wouldn't hear my appale to him; an' I'm lavin' you comfortable, agrah, an' wantin' for nothin'. Sure it's only about five-an'-twenty miles from this—a mere step. The good God bless an' take care of you, my darlin' wife, till I come home to you!"

He kissed the tears that streamed from her eyes;

and, hemming several times, pressed her hand, his face rather averted, then grasped his staff, and commenced his journey.

Scenes like this were important events to our humble couple. Life, when untainted by the crimes and artificial manners which destroy its purity, is a beautiful thing to contemplate among the virtuous poor; and, where the current of affection runs deep and smooth, the slightest incident will agitate it. So was it with Owen M'Carthy and his wife. Simplicity, truth, and affection, constituted their character. In them there was no complication of incongruous elements. The order of their virtues was not broken, nor the purity of their affections violated, by the anomalous blending together of opposing principles, such as are to be found in those who are involuntarily contaminated by the corruption of human society.

Owen had not gone far, when Kathleen called to him: "Owen, ahagur—stand, darlin'; but don't come back a step, for fraid o' bad luck."*

"Did I forget anything, Kathleen?" he inquired. "Let me see; no; sure I have my beads an' my tobaccy box, an' my two clane shirts an' handkerchers in the bundle. What is it acushla?"

"I need'nt be axin' you, for I know you wouldn't forget it; but for fraid you might—Owen, whin you're at Tubber Derg, go to little Alley's grave, an' look at it; an' bring me back word how it appears. You might get it cleaned up, if there's weeds or anything growin' upon it; an', Owen, would you bring me a bit o' the clay, tied up in your pocket. Whin you're there, spake to her; tell her it was the lovin' mother that bid you, an' say anything that you'd think might keep her asy, an' give her pleasure. Tell her we're not now as we wor whin she was wid us; that we don't feel hunger, nor cowld, nor want; an'

* When an Irish peasant sets out on a journey, or to transact business in fair or market, he will not, if possible, turn back. It is considered unlucky; as it is also to be crossed by a hare, or met by a red-haired woman.

that nothin' is a throuble to us, barrin, that we miss *her*—ay, even yet—a *suillish machree** that she was —that we miss her fair face an' goolden head from among us. Tell her this; an' tell her it was the lovin' mother that said it, an' that sint the message to her."

"I'll do it all, Kathleen; I'll do it all—all. An' now go in, darlin', an' don't be frettin'. Maybe we'll soon be near her, plase God, where we can see the place she sleeps in, often."

They then separated again; and Owen, considerably affected by the maternal tenderness of his wife, proceeded on his journey. He had not, actually, even at the period of his leaving home, been able to determine on what particular friend he should first visit. That his welcome would be hospitable, nay, enthusiastically so, he was certain. In the mean time, he vigorously pursued his journey; and partook neither of refreshment nor rest, until he arrived, a little after dusk, at a turn of the well-known road, which, had it been day-light, would have opened to him a view of Tubber Derg. He looked towards the beeches, however, under which it stood; but to gain a sight of it was impossible. His road now lying a little to the right, he turned to the house of his sterling friend, Frank Farrell, who had given him and his family shelter and support, when he was driven, without remorse, from his own holding. In a short time he reached Frank's residence, and felt a glow of sincere satisfaction at finding the same air of comfort and warmth about it as formerly. Through the kitchen window he saw the strong light of the blazing fire, and heard, ere he presented himself, the loud hearty laugh of his friend's wife, precisely as light and animated as it had been fifteen years before.

Owen lifted the latch and entered, with that fluttering of the pulse which every man feels on meeting with a friend, after an interval of many years.

* Light of my heart.

"Musha, good people, can yees tell me is Frank Farrell at home?"

"Why, thin, he's not jist widin now, but he'll be here in no time entirely," replied one of his daughters. "Won't you sit down, honest man, an' we'll sind for him?"

"I'm thankful to you," said Owen. "I'll sit, sure enough, till he comes in."

"Why thin!—eh! it must—it *can* be no other!" exclaimed Farrell's wife, bringing over a candle, and looking Owen earnestly in the face; "sure I'd know that voice all the world over! Why, thin, Marciful Father—Owen M'Carthy—Owen M'Carthy, is it your four quarters that's livin' an' well? Queen o' heaven, Owen M'Carthy, darlin', you're welcome!" the word was here interrupted by a hearty kiss from the kind housewife; "welcome a thousand, an' a thousand times! *Vick na hoiah!* Owen dear, an' are you livin' at all? An' Kathleen, Owen, an' the childhre, an' all of yees—an' how are they?"

"Throth, we're livin' an' well, Bridget; never was betther, thanks be to God an' you, in our lives."

Owen was now surrounded by such of Farrel's children, as were old enough to remember him; every one of whom he shook hands with, and kissed.

"Why, thin, the Lord save my sowl, Bridget," said he, "are these the little bouchaleens an' colleens that were runnin' about my feet whin I was here afore! Well, to be sure! How they do shoot up! An' is this Atty?"

"No; but *this* is Atty, Owen: faix, Brian outgrew him; an' here's Mary, an' this is Bridget Oge."

"Well!—well! But, where did these two young shoots come from? this boy an' the colleen here? They worn't to the fore, in *my* time, Bridget."

"This is Owen, called afther yourself—an this is Kathleen. I need'nt tell you who she was called afther."

"*Gutsho, alanna? thurm pogue?*—come here child, and kiss me," said Owen, to his little name-

sake ; "an' sure I can't forget the little woman here ; *gutsho*, a colleen and kiss me too."

Owen took her on his knee, and kissed her twice.

"Och, but, poor Kathleen," said he, "will be the proud woman of this, when she hears it ; in throth she will be that."

"Arrah! what's comin over me!" said Mrs. Farrell. "Brian, run up to Micky Lowrie's, for your father. An' see, Brian, don't say who's wantin' him, till we give him a start. Mary, come here, acushla," she added to her eldest daughter, in a whisper—"take these two bottles, an' fly up to Peggy Finnigan's for the full o' them o' whisky. Now be back before you're there, or if you don't, that I mightn't but you'll see what you'll get. Fly, aroon, an' don't let the grass grow undher your feet. An' Owen darlin', —but first sit over to the fire :—here get over to this side, it's the snuggest ;—arrah, Owen—an' sure I dunna what to ax you first. You're all well? all to the fore?"

"All well, Bridget, an' thanks be to heaven, all to the fore."

"Glory be to God! Throth it warms my heart to hear it. An' the childhre's all up finely, boys an' girls?"

"Throth, they are, Bridget, as good lookin' a family o' childhre as you'd wish to see. An' what is betther, they're as good as their good-lookin'."

"Throth, they could'nt but be that, if they tuck at all afther their father an' mother. Bridget, aroon, rub the pan betther—an' lay the knife down, I'll cut the bacon myself, but go an' get a dozen o' the freshest eggs ;—an' Kathleen, Owen, how does poor Kathleen look? Does she stand it as well as yourself?"

"As young as ever you seen her. God help her! —a thousand degrees betther now nor whin you seen her last."

"An' well to do, Owen?—now tell the thruth? Och, musha, I forget who I'm spakin' to, or I wouldn't disremimber the ould sayin' that's abroad this many a

year:—'who ever knew a M'Carthy of Tubber Derg to tell a lie, break his word, or refuse to help a friend in distress.' But, Owen, you're well to do in the world?"

"We're as well, Bridget, or maybe better, nor you ever knew us, except, indeed, afore the ould lase was run out wid us."

"God be praised agin! Musha, turn round a little, Owen, for fraid Frank 'ud get too clear a sight of your face at first. Arrah, do you think he'll know you? Och, to be sure he will; I needn't ax. Your voice would tell upon you, any day.

"Know me! Indeed Frank 'ud know my shadow. He'll know me wid half a look."

And Owen was right, for quickly did the eye of his old friend recognize him, despite of the little plot that was laid to try his penetration. To describe their interview would be to repeat the scene we have already attempted to depict between Owen and Mrs. Farrell. No sooner were the rights of hospitality performed, than the tide of conversation began to flow with greater freedom. Owen ascertained one important fact, which we will here mention, because it produces in a great degree, the want of anything like an independent class of yeomanry in the country. On inquiring after his old acquaintances, he discovered that a great number of them, owing to high rents, had emigrated to America. They belonged to that class of independent farmers, who, after the expiration of their old leases, finding the little capital which they had saved, beginning to diminish, in consequence of rents which they could not pay, deemed it more prudent, while anything remained in their hands, to seek a country where capital and industry might be made available. Thus did the landlords, by their mismanagement and neglect, absolutely drive off their estates the only men, who, if properly encouraged, were capable of becoming the strength and pride of the country. It is this system, joined to the curse of middlemen and sub-letting, which has left the country without any third grade of decent

substantial yeomen, who might stand as a bond of peace between the highest and lowest classes. It is this which has split the kingdom into two divisions, constituting the extreme ends of society—the wealthy, and the wretched. If this third class existed, Ireland would neither be so political nor discontented as she is; but on the contrary, more remarkable for peace and industry. At present, the lower classes, being too poor, are easily excited by those who promise them a better order of things than that which exists. These theorists step into the exercise of that legitimate influence which the landed proprietors have lost by their neglect. There is no middle class in the country, who can turn round to them, and say, "our circumstances are easy, we want nothing; carry your promises to the poor, for that which you hold forth to *their* hopes, *we* enjoy in reality." The poor soldier, who, because he was wretched, volunteered to go on the forlorn hope, made a fortune; but when asked if he would go on a second enterprise of a similar kind, shrewdly replied; "general, I am *now* an independent man; send some *poor* devil on your forlorn hope who wants to make a fortune."

Owen now heard anecdotes and narratives of all occurrences, whether interesting or strange, that had taken place during his absence. Among others, was the death of his former landlord, and the removal of the agent who had driven him to beggary. Tubber Derg, he found, was then the property of a humane and considerate man, who employed a judicious and benevolent gentleman to manage it.

"One thing, I can tell you," said Frank; "it was but a short time in the new agent's hands, when the dacent farmers stopped goin' to America."

"But Frank," said Owen, and he sighed on putting the question, "who is in Tubber Derg, now?"

"Why thin, a son of ould Rousin' Red-head's, of Tullyvernon—young Con Roe, or the Ace o' Hearts—for he was called both by the youngsters—if you remimber him. His head's as red, an' double as big,

even, as his father's was, an' you know that no hat would fit ould Con, until he sent his measure to Jemmy Lamb, the hatter. Dick Nugent put it out on him, that Jemmy always made Rousin' Red-head's hat, either upon the half-bushel pot, or a five gallon keg of whisky. 'Talkin' of the keg,' says Dick, 'for the matther o' that,' says he, 'divil a much differ the hat will persave; for the one'—meanin' ould Con's head, who was a hard drinker—'the one,' says Con, 'is as much a keg as the other—ha! ha! ha!' Dick met Rousin' Red-head another day; 'arrah Con,' says he, 'why do you get your hats made upon a *pot*, man alive? Sure that's the rason that you're so fond o' *pot*een.' A quare mad crathur was Dick, an' would go forty miles for a fight. Poor fellow, he got his scull broke in a skrimmage betwixt the Redmonds and the O'Hanlon's; an' his last words were, 'bad luck to you, Redmond—O'Hanlon, I never thought *you*, above all men, dead an' gone, would be the death o' me.' Poor fellow! he was for pacifyin' them, for a wondher; but instead o' that, he got pacified himself."

"An' how is young Con doin', Frank?"

"Hut, divil a much time he has to do aither well or ill, yit. There was four tenants on Tubber Derg since you left it, an' he's the fifth. It's hard to say how he'll do; but I believe he's the best o' thim, for so far. That may be owin' to the landlord. The rent's let down to him; an' I think he'll be able to take bread, an' good bread, too, out of it."

"God send, poor man!"

"Now, Owen, would you like to go back to it?"

"I can't say that. I love the place, *but I suffered too much in it*. No; but I'll tell you, Frank; if there was e'er a snug farm near it that I could get rasonable, I'd take it."

Frank slapped his knee exultingly. "*Ma chuirp!*—do you say so, Owen?"

"Indeed, I do."

"Thin, upon my song, that's the luckiest thing I ever knew. There's, this blessed minute, a farm o'

sixteen acres, that the Lacys is lavin'—goin' to America—an' it's to be set. They'll go the week afther next, an' the house needn't be cowld, for you can come to it the very day afther they lave it."

"Well," said Owen, "I'm glad of that. Will you come wid me to-morrow, an' we'll see about it?"

"To be sure I will; an' what's betther, too, the agint is a son of ould Misther Rogerson's; a man that knows you an' the histhory o' them you came from, well. An', another thing, Owen; I tell you, whin it's abroad that *you* want to take the farm, there's not a man in the parish would bid agin you. You may know that yourself."

"I think, indeed, they would rather sarve me than otherwise," replied Owen; "an', in the name o' God, we'll see what can be done. Misther Rogerson, himself, 'ud spake to his son for me; so that I'll be sure of his intherest. Arrah, Frank, how is an ould friend o' mine, that I have a great regard for—poor Widow Murray?"

"Widow Murray! Poor woman, *she's* happy."

"You don't mane she's dead?"

"She's dead, Owen, and happy, I trust, in the Saviour. She died last spring was a two years."

"God be good to her sowl! An' are the childhre in her place still? It's she that was the dacent woman."

"Throth, they are, an' sorrow a betther doin' family in the parish than they are. It's they that'll be glad to see you, Owen. Many a time I seen their poor mother, heavens be her bed, lettin' down the tears, whin she used to be spakin' of you, or mintionin' how often you sarved her; espeshially, about some day or other that you previnted her cows from bein' canted for the rint. She's dead now, an', God he knows, an honest hard-workin' woman she ever was."

"Dear me, Frank, isn't it a wondher to think how the people dhrop off! There's Widow Murray, one o' my ouldest frinds, an' Pether M'Mahon, an' Barny Lorinan—not to forget pleasant Rousin' Red-head—

all taken away! Well!—well! Sure it's the will o' God! We can't be here always."

After much conversation, enlivened by the bottle, though but sparingly used on the part of Owen, the hour of rest arrived, when the family separated for the night.

The grey dawn of a calm beautiful summer's morning found Owen up and abroad, long before the family of honest Frank had risen. When dressing himself, with an intention of taking an early walk, he was asked by his friend why he stirred so soon, or if he—his host—should accompany him.

"No," replied Owen; "lie still; jist let me look over the counthry while it's asleep. Whin I'm musin' this-away I don't like any body to be along wid me. I have a place to go an' see, too—an' a message—a tendher message, from poor Kathleen, to deliver, that I wouldn't wish a second person to hear. Sleep, Frank. I'll jist crush the head o' my pipe agin one o' the half-burned turf that the fire was raked wid, an' walk out for an hour or two. Afther our breakfast, we'll go an' look about this new farm."

He sallied out as he spoke, and closed the door after him in that quiet thoughtful way for which he was ever remarkable. The season was midsummer, and the morning wanted at least an hour of sun-rise. Owen ascended a little knoll, above Frank's house, on which he stood and surveyed the surrounding country with a pleasing but melancholy interest. As his eye rested on Tubber Derg, he felt the difference strongly between the imperishable glories of nature's works, and those which are executed by man. His house he would not have known, except by its site. It was not, in fact, the same house, but another which had been built in its stead. This disappointed and vexed him. An object on which his affections had been placed was removed. A rude stone house stood before him, rough and unplastered; against each end of which was built a stable and cow-house, sloping down from the gables to low doors at both sides; adjoining these rose two

mounds of filth, large enough to be easily distinguished from the knoll on which he stood. He sighed as he contrasted it with the neat and beautiful farm-house, which shone there in his happy days, white as a lily, beneath the covering of the lofty beeches. There was no air of comfort, neatness, or independence, about it; on the contrary, everything betrayed the evidence of struggle and difficulty, joined, probably, to want both of skill and of capital. He was disappointed, and turned his gaze upon the general aspect of the country, and the houses in which either of his old acquaintances or their children lived. The features of the landscape were, certainly, the same; but even here was a change for the worse. The warmth of colouring, which wealth and independence give to the appearance of a cultivated country, was gone. Decay and coldness seemed to brood upon everything he saw. The houses, the farm-yards, the ditches, and enclosures, were all marked by the blasting proofs of national decline. Some exceptions there were to this disheartening prospect; but they were only sufficient to render the torn and ragged evidences of poverty, and its attendant—carelessness—more conspicuous. He left the knoll, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and putting it into his waistcoat pocket, ascended a larger hill, which led to the grave-yard where his child lay buried. On his way to this hill, which stood about half a mile distant, he passed a few houses of an humble description, with whose inhabitants he had been well acquainted. Some of these stood nearly as he remembered them; but others were roofless, with their dark mud gables either fallen in or partially broken down. He surveyed their smoke-coloured walls with sorrow; and looked, with a sense of the transient character of all man's works, upon the chickweed, docks, and nettles, which had shot up so rankly on the spot where many a chequered scene of joy and sorrow had flitted over the circumscribed circle of humble life, ere the annihilating wing of ruin swept away them and their habitations.

When he had ascended the hill, his eye took a wider range. The more distant and picturesque part of the country lay before him. "Ay!" said he, in a soliloquy. "Lord bless us, how sthrange is this world!—an' what poor crathurs are men! There's the dark mountains, the hills, the rivers, an' the green glens, all the same; an' nothin' else amost but's changed! The very song of that blackbird, in thim thorn bushes an' hazels below me, is like the voice of an ould friend to my ears. Och, indeed, hardly that, for even the voice of man changes; but that song is the same as I heard it for the best part o' my life. That mornin' star, too, is the same bright crathur up there that it ever was! God help us! Hardly anything changes but man, an' he seems to think that he can never change; if one is to judge by his thoughtlessness, folly, an' wickedness!"

A smaller hill, around the base of which went the same imperfect road that crossed the glen of Tubber Derg, prevented him from seeing the grave-yard to which he was about to extend his walk. To this road he directed his steps. On reaching it he looked, still with a strong memory of former times, to the glen in which his children, himself, and his ancestors had all, during their day, played in the happy thoughtlessness of childhood and youth. But the dark and ragged house jarred upon his feelings. He turned from it with pain, and his eyes rested upon the still green valley with evident relief. He thought of his "buried flower"—"his goolden haired darlin'," as he used to call her—and almost fancied that he saw her once more wandering waywardly through its tangled mazes, gathering berries, or strolling along the green meadow, with a garland of gowans about her neck. Imagination, indeed, cannot heighten the image of the dead whom we love; but even if it could, there was no standard of ideal beauty in her father's mind beyond that of her own. She had been beautiful; but her beauty was pensive: a fair yet melancholy child; for the charm that ever encompassed her was one of ser-

row and tenderness. Had she been volatile and mirthful, as children usually are, he would not have carried so far into his future life the love of her which he cherished. Another reason why he still loved her strongly, was a consciousness that her death had been occasioned by distress and misery; for, as he said, when looking upon the scenes of her brief but melancholy existence—"Avourneen machree, I remimber to see you pickin' the berries; but asthore—asthore—it wasn't for play you did it. It was to keep away the cuttin' of hunger from your heart! Of all our childhre every one said that *you* wor the M'Carthy—never sayin' much, but the heart in you ever full of goodness an' affection. God help me, I'm glad—an', now that I'm comin' near it—loth to see her grave."

He had now reached the verge of the grave-yard. Its fine old ruin stood there as usual, but not altogether without the symptoms of change. Some persons had, for the purposes of building, thrown down one of its most picturesque walls. Still its ruins clothed with ivy, its mullions moss-covered, its gothic arches and tracery, grey with age, were the same in appearance as he had ever seen them.

On entering this silent palace of death, he reverently uncovered his head, blessed himself, and with feelings, deeply agitated, sought the grave of his beloved child. He approached it; but a sudden transition from sorrow to indignation took place in his mind, even before he reached the spot in which she lay. "Sacred Mother!" he exclaimed, "who has dared to bury in our ground? Who has—what villain has attimpted to come in upon the M'Carthys—upon the M'Carthy Mores, of Tubber Derg? Who could—had I no friend to prev——eh? Sacred Mother, what's this? Father of heaven forgive me! Forgive me, sweet Saviour, for this bad feelin' I got into! Who—who—could raise a headstone over the darlin' o' my heart, widout one of us knowin' it? Who—who could do it? But let me see if I can make it out. Oh, who could do this blessed

thing, for the poor an' the sorrowful?" He began, and with difficulty read as follows:—

"Here lies the body of Alice M'Carthy, the beloved daughter of Owen and Kathleen M'Carthy, aged nine years. She was descended from the M'Carthy Mores.

"Requiescat in pace.

"This head-stone was raised over her by widow Murray, and her son, James Murray, out of grateful respect for Owen and Kathleen M'Carthy, who never suffered the widow and orphan, or a distressed neighbour, to crave assistance from them in vain, until it pleased God to visit them with affliction."

"Thanks to you, my Saviour!" said Owen, dropping on his knees over the grave. "Thanks an' praise be to your holy name, that in the middle of my poverty—of all my poverty—I was not forgotten! nor my darlin' child let to lie widout honour in the grave of her family! Make me worthy, blessed heaven, of what is written down upon me here! An' if the departed spirit of her that honoured the dust of my buried daughter is unhappy, oh, let her be relieved, an' let this act be remimbered to her! Bless her son, too, gracious Father, an' all belongin' to her on this earth! an', if it be your holy will, let them never know distress, or poverty, or wickedness!"

He then offered up a Pater Noster for the repose of his child's soul, and another for the kind-hearted and grateful widow Murray, after which he stood to examine the grave with greater accuracy.

There was, in fact, no grave visible. The little mound, under which lay what was once such a touching image of innocence, beauty, and feeling, had sunk down to the level of the earth about it. He regretted this, inasmuch as it took away, he thought, part of her individuality. Still he knew it was the spot wherein she had been buried, and, with much of that vivid feeling, and strong figurative language, inseparable from the habits of thought and language of the old Irish families, he delivered the mother's message to the inanimate dust of her once beautiful and heart-loved child. He spoke in a broken voice, for even

the mention of her name aloud, over the clay that contained her, struck with a fresh burst of sorrow upon his heart.

"Alley," he exclaimed, in Irish, "Alley, *nhien machree*, your father that loved *you* more nor he loved any other human crathur, brings a message to you from the mother of your heart, avourneen! She bid me call to see the spot where you're lyin', my buried flower, an' to tell you that we're not now, thanks be to God, as we wor whin you lived wid us. We are well to do now, *acushla oge machree*, an' not in hunger, an' sickness, an' misery, as we wor whin you suffered them all! You will love to hear this, pulse of our hearts, an' to know that, through all we suffered —an' bittherly we did suffer since you departed—we never let you out of our memory. No, *asthore villish*, we thought of you, an' cried afther our poor dead flower, many an' many's the time. An' she bid me tell you, darlin' of my heart, that we feel nothin' now so much as that you are not wid us to share our comfort an' our happiness. Oh, what wouldn't the mother give to have you back wid her; but it can't be—an' what wouldn't I give to have you before my eyes agin, in health an' in life—but it can't be. The lovin' mother sent this message to you, Alley. Take it from her; she bid me tell you that we are well an' happy; our name is pure, and, like yourself, widout spot or stain. Won't you pray for us before God, an' get him an' his blessed Mother to look on us wid favour an' compassion? Farewell, Alley asthore! May you sleep in peace, an' rest on the breast of your great Father in heaven, until we all meet in happiness together. It's your father that's spakin' to you, our lost flower; an' the hand that often smoothed your goolden head is now upon your grave."

He wiped his eyes as he concluded, and after lifting a little of the clay from her grave, he tied it carefully up, and put it into his pocket.

Having left the grave-yard, he retraced his steps towards Frank Farrell's house. The sun had now

risen, and as Owen ascended the larger of the two hills which we have mentioned, he stood again to view the scene that stretched beneath him. About an hour before all was still; the whole country lay motionless, as if the land had been a land of the dead. The mountains, in the distance, were covered with the thin mists of morning; the milder and richer parts of the landscape had appeared in that dim grey distinctness which gives to distant objects such a clear outline. With the exception of the blackbird's song, everything seemed as if stricken into silence; there was not a breeze stirring; both animate and inanimate nature reposed as if in a trance; the very trees appeared asleep, and their leaves motionless, as if they had been of marble. But now the scene was changed. The sun had flung his splendour upon the mountain-tops, from which the mists were tumbling in broken fragments to the valleys between them. A thousand birds poured their songs upon the ear; the breeze was up, and the columns of smoke from the farm-houses and cottages played, as if in frolic, in the air. A white haze was beginning to rise from the meadows; early teams were afoot; and labourers going abroad to their employment. The lakes in the distance shone like mirrors; and the clear springs on the mountain-sides glittered in the sun, like gems on which the eye could scarcely rest. Life, and light, and motion, appear to be inseparable. The dew of morning lay upon nature like a brilliant veil, realizing the beautiful image of Horace, as applied to woman:

Vultus nimium lubricus aspici.

By-and-by the songs of the early workmen were heard; nature had awoke; and Owen, whose heart was strongly, though unconsciously, alive to the influence of natural religion, participated in the general elevation of the hour, and sought with freshened spirits the house of his entertainer.

As he entered this hospitable roof, the early industry of his friend's wife presented him with a well-

swept hearth and a pleasant fire, before which had been placed the identical chair that they had appropriated to his own use. Frank was enjoying "a blast o' the pipe," after having risen; to which luxury the return of Owen gave additional zest and placidity. In fact, Owen's presence communicated a holiday spirit to the family; a spirit, too, which declined not for a moment during the period of his visit.

"Frank," said Owen, "to tell you the thruth, I'm not half pleased wid you, this mornin'! I think you didn't thrate me as I ought to expect to be thrated."

"Musha, Owen M'Carthy, how is that?"

"Why, you said nothin' about widow Murray raisin' a head-stone over our child. You kep me in the dark there, Frank, an' sich a start I never got as I did this mornin', in the grave-yard beyant."

"Upon my sowl, Owen, it wasn't my fau't, nor any of our fau'ts; for, to tell you the thruth, we had so much to think and discoorse of last night, that it never sthruck me, good or bad. Indeed, it was Bridget that put it first in my head, afther you wint out, an' thin it was too late. Ay, poor woman, the dacent strain was ever in her, the heaven's be her bed!"

"Frank, if any one of her family was to abuse me till the dogs wouldn't lick my blood, I'd only give them back good for evil afther that. Oh, Frank, that goes to my heart! To put a head-stone over my weeny goolden haired darlin', for the sake of the little thrifles I sarved thim in! Well!—may none belonging to her ever know poverty or hardship! but if they do, an' that I have it—— How-an'-iver, no matther. God bless thim! God bless thim! Wait till Kathleen hears it!"

"An' the best of it was, Owen, that she never expected to see one of your faces. But, Owen, you think too much about that child. Let us talk of something else. You seen Tubber Derg wanst more?"

"I did; an' I love it still, in spite of the state it's in."

"Ah! it's different from what it was in your happy

days. I was spakin' to Bridget about the farm, an' she advises us to go, widout losin' a minute, an' take it if we can."

"It's near this place I'll die, Frank. I'd not rest in my grave if I wasn't berrid among my own; so we'll take the farm if possible."

"Well, then, Bridget, hurry the breakfast, avourneen; an', in the name o' goodness, we'll set out, an' clinch the business this very day."

Owen, as we said, was prompt in following up his determinations. After breakfast they saw the agent and his father, for both lived together. Old Rogerson had been intimately acquainted with the M'Carthys, and, as Frank had anticipated, used his influence with the agent in procuring for the son of his old friend and acquaintance the farm which he sought.

"Jack," said the old gentleman, "you don't probably know the history and character of the Tubber Derg M'Carthys so well as I do. No man ever required the written bond of a M'Carthy; and it was said of them, and is said still, that the widow and orphan, the poor man or the stranger, never sought their assistance in vain. I, myself, will go security, if necessary, for Owen M'Carthy."

"Sir," replied Owen, "I'm thankful to you; I'm grateful to you. But I wouldn't take the farm, or bid for it at all, unless I could bring forrid enough to stock it as I wish, an' to lay in all that's wantin' to work it well. It 'ud be useless for me to take it—to struggle a year or two—impoverish the land—an' thin run away out of it. No, no; I have what'll put me upon it wid daeency an' comfort."

"Then, since my father has taken such an interest in you, M'Garthy, you must have the farm. We shall get leases prepared, and the business completed, in a few days; for I go to Dublin on this day week. Father, I now remember the character of this family; and I remember, too, the sympathy which was felt for one of them, who was harshly ejected, about seventeen or eighteen years ago, out of the lands on which his forefathers had lived, I understand, for centuries."

"I am that man, sir," returned Owen. "It's too long a story to tell now; but it was only out o' *part* of the lands, sir, that I was put. What I held was but a poor patch compared to what the family held in my grandfather's time. A great part of it went out of our hands at his death."

"It was very kind of you, Misther Rogerson, to offer to go security for him," said Frank; "but if security was wantin', sir, I'd not be willin' to let any body but myself back him. I'd go all I'm worth in the world—an', be my sowl, double as much—for the same man."

"I know that, Frank, an' I thank you; but I could put security in Mr. Rogerson's hands here, if it was wanted. Good mornin', an' thank you both, gintlemen. To tell yees the thruth," he added, with a smile, "I long to be among my ould friends—manin' the people, an' the hills, an' the green fields of Tubber Derg—agin; an', thanks be to goodness, sure I will soon."

In fact, wherever Owen went, within the bounds of his native parish, his name, to use a significant phrase of the people, was before him. His arrival at Frank Farrell's was now generally known by all his acquaintances, and the numbers who came to see him were almost beyond belief. During the two or three successive days, he went among his old "*croniens;*" and no sooner was his arrival at any particular house intimated, than the neighbours all flocked to him. Scythes were left idle, spades were stuck in the earth, and work neglected for the time being; all crowded about him with a warm and friendly interest, not proceeding from idle curiosity, but from affection and respect for the man.

The interview between him and widow Murray's children was affecting. Owen felt deeply the delicate and touching manner in which they had evinced their gratitude for the services he had rendered them; and young Murray remembered, with a strong gush of

feeling, the distresses under which they lay when Owen had assisted them. Their circumstances, owing to the strenuous exertions of the widow's eldest son, soon afterwards improved; and, in accordance with the sentiments of hearts naturally grateful, they had taken that method of testifying what they felt. Indeed, so well had Owen's unparalleled affection for his favourite child been known, that it was the general opinion about Tubber Derg that her death had broken his heart.

"Poor Owen! he's dead," they used to say; "the death of his weeny one, while he was away in Dublin, gave him the finishing blow. It broke his heart."

Before the week was expired, Owen had the satisfaction of depositing the lease of his new farm, held at a moderate rent, in the hands of Frank Farrell; who, tying it up along with his own, secured it in "the black chest." Nothing remained now but to return home, forthwith, and communicate the intelligence to Kathleen. Frank had promised, as soon as the Lacys should vacate the house, to come, with a long train of cars, and a number of his neighbours, in order to transfer Owen's family and furniture to his new dwelling. Everything, therefore, had been arranged; and Owen had nothing to do but hold himself in readiness for the welcome arrival of Frank and his friends.

Owen, however, had no sense of enjoyment when not participated in by his beloved Kathleen. If he felt sorrow, it was less as a personal feeling than as a calamity to her. If he experienced happiness, it was doubly sweet to him as reflected from his Kathleen. All this was mutual between them. Kathleen loved Owen precisely as he loved Kathleen. Nor let our readers suppose, that such characters are not in humble life. It is in humble life, where the springs of feeling are not corrupted by dissimulation and evil knowledge, that the purest, and tenderest, and strongest virtues are to be found.

As Owen approached his home, he could not avoid contrasting the circumstances of his return *now* with

those under which, almost broken-hearted after his journey to Dublin, he presented himself to his sorrowing and bereaved wife about sixteen years before. He raised his hat, and thanked God for the success which had, since that period, attended him, and, immediately after his silent thanksgiving, entered the house.

His welcome, our readers may be assured, was tender and affectionate. The whole family gathered about him, and, on his informing them that they were once more about to reside on a farm adjoining to their beloved Tubber Derg, Kathleen's countenance brightened, and the tear of delight gushed to her eyes.

"God be praised, Owen," she exclaimed; "we will have the ould place afore our eyes, an' what is betther, we will be near where Alley is lyin'. But that's true, Owen," she added, "did you give the light of our hearts the mother's message?"

Owen paused, and his features were slightly overshadowed, but only by the solemnity of the feeling.

"Kathleen," said he, "I gave her your message; but, avourneen, I have sthrange news for you about Alley."

"What, Owen? What is it, acushla? Tell me quick!"

"The blessed child was not neglected: no but she was honoured in our absence. A head-stone was put over her, an' stands there purtily this minute."

"Mother of Glory, Owen!"

"It's thruth. Widow Murray an' her son Jemmy put it up, wid words upon it that brought the tears to my eyes. Widow Murray is dead, but her childher's doin' well. May God bless an' prosper them, an' make her happy.

The delighted mother's heart was not proof against the widow's gratitude, expressed, as it had been, in a manner so affecting. She rocked herself to and fro in silence, whilst the tears fell in showers down her cheeks. The grief, however, which this affectionate couple felt for their child, was not always such as the

reader has perceived it to be. It was rather a revival of emotions that had long slumbered, but never died; and the associations arising from the journey to Tubber Derg, had thrown them back, by the force of memory, almost to the period of her death. At times, indeed, their imagination had conjured her up strongly, but the present was an epoch in the history of their sorrow.

There is little more to be said. Sorrow was soon succeeded by cheerfulness and the glow of expected pleasure, which is ever the more delightful as the pleasure is pure. In about a week their old neighbours, with their carts and cars, arrived; and before the day was closed on which Owen removed to his new residence, he found himself once more sitting at his own hearth, among the friends of his youth, and the companions of his maturer years. Ere a twelvemonth elapsed, he had his house perfectly white, and as nearly resembling that of Tubber Derg in its better days as possible. About two years ago we saw him one evening in the month of June, as he sat on a bench beside his door, singing with a happy heart his favourite song of "*Colleen dhas crootha na mo.*" It was about an hour before sunset. The house stood on a gentle eminence, beneath which a sweep of green meadow stretched away to the skirts of Tubber Derg. Around him was a country naturally fertile, and, in spite of the national depression, still beautiful to contemplate. Kathleen and two servant maids were milking, and the whole family were assembled about the door.

"Well, childher," said the father, "didn't I tell yees the bitther mornin' we left Tubber Derg, not to cry or be disheartened—that 'there was a good God above, who might do somethin' for us *yet?*' I never *did* give up my trust in Him, an' I never *will.* You see, afther all our little throubles, he has wanst more brought us together, an' made us happy. Praise an' glory to his name!"

I looked at him as he spoke. He had raised his eyes to heaven, and a gleam of elevated devotion, per-

haps worthy of being called sublime, irradiated his features. The sun, too, in setting, fell upon his broad temples and iron-grey locks, with a light solemn and religious. The effect to me, who knew his noble character, and all that he had suffered, was as if the eye of God then rested upon the decline of a virtuous man's life with approbation;—as if he had lifted up the glory of his countenance upon him. Would that many of his thoughtless countrymen had been present! They might have blushed for their crimes, and been content to sit and learn wisdom at the feet of Owen M'Carthy.

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